Contributions by **Marie Blanche, Max Pemberton, W. Douglas Newton, John S. Margerison, Keble Howard, Christine Jope-Slade,** etc.

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*Photo* *Wrather & Boys.*

**There is a wide gulf between such parts as those of Lady Mary Carlyle in *Monsieur Beaucaire* and a hideous old woman of the charlady type, but as Miss Marie Blanche, the beautiful young actress, declares in a striking article on page 415, it is a gulf which many actresses could bridge were versatility encouraged as it used to be.**



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Photo. Wrather & Buys.

Miss Marie Blanche has always longed to play a crinoline part, and she does so very charmingly in *Carminetta*, whereas in *Samples* she appeared as a frowsy old woman with equal success.

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# IS IT A CRIME TO BE VERSATILE?

By Marie Blanche.

"Nowadays to make a success in a decided type of part is fatal to a player!" This sounds a sweeping statement, but in the following article Miss Marie Blanche, the charming actress, who is now making such a success in *Carminetta* at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, proves what a lot of truth there is in it, since present-day managers do not seem to welcome versatility, and often decree that an actress who makes a hit in a special line of work shall be given no chance in other directions.

Photo Wrather & Buys.

Revue gave Miss Blanche a chance to show her versatility, and to prove that she can "make up" for and carry through a character part w th intense realism.

Don't think me too captious for words—but, really, the stage has changed a lot of late years!

Once—in the good old days of stock companies, *repertoire*, and minute salaries—actors and actresses had to be versatile or they were useless to the managers who engaged them.

Nowadays to be versatile appears to be a crime.

Let me explain. When you and I, and all the present generation were in our peaceful cradles, the stage was flourishing, but in a very different style to its lordly progress of to-day. The only comparison that springs to my mind is the quaint old travelling circus and the gorgeous Lord Mayor's Show. That, roughly speaking, is the difference between the stage as it *was* and the stage as it *is*.

In the old days leading ladies drew £3 a week, if they were lucky, and found all their own clothes. This meant "some" work, as the people across the Atlantic say! For to find clothes, gloves, hats, and shoes for four or five different characters a week is no joke! Miss Ellen Terry, I believe, once said that she pinned her faith to white muslin and black velvet! Which seems to argue that these materials are remarkably adaptable.

My family has been connected with the stage for many years, and I have heard descriptions from my own relations of a single dress that served for a morning, afternoon, evening, or garden party toilette, with the skilful addition or subtraction of lace at the neck and wrists! Compare that

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picture with the stage of to-day, when managers cheerfully spend £35 or more on a dress for a chorus girl drawing £2 a week—in a show that may not run a fortnight!

In the old days, unless an actor could play the hero on Monday and the old squire on Tuesday, and an actress give a good account of herself as an ancient dame to-night and a village maiden to-morrow, managers had no use for them. Versatility was essential in those days—to-day it is absolutely taboo.

*Photos* *Wrather & Buys.*

Miss Blanche does not share the usual aversion to making herself look plain when a character demands it; indeed she enjoys it——

——just as she would enjoy donning trousers and overall were she playing the part of a girl window-cleaner.

I have often wondered why managers have changed their mind on this matter. It must lead to infinite trouble, and necessitate constant searching for fresh players when new plays are cast. Because, you see, a manager does not believe that the same actress who has played a cockney servant in the production that is just finishing could possibly be any good as an earl's daughter in the new show that is just going into rehearsal.

Of course, if he had another cockney servant to offer her, he would be only too glad to keep her on his salary list, but as it is—well, she joins the ever-increasing battalion of the "Resting."

In *Samples*, Harry Grattan's brilliant revue, I appeared in many characters, among them a hideous old woman, very peculiar in dress and aspect. Having disguised myself in this way, I wore many other dresses and played many other scenes, finally finishing up as myself—more or less.

Here is a true story, concerning

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my earlier days as an actress. I had been playing a youthful, sweet-and-sugary girl, and a certain well-known West-End manager saw me and sent for me. Knowing something of the parts in a play he had marked for production, I rejoiced. He was most charming:

"Nothing to offer you now; nothing suitable; but later I hope to have something your style."

"Oh, but what about so and-so?" I inquired, mentioning the broad comedy part I had in mind.

"That? Oh—but you couldn't touch that—it's broad comedy" said the manager.

And nothing would persuade him I could play it; though he finally offered me, as a definite promise, the sweet-and-sugary *ingénue* in the same play at £10 a week—when it was produced. I went away, and barely six months later another manager gave me a broad comedy part; and the first manager came to see me play it. Two days later he offered me the part I had originally asked him for—at a salary of £50 a week! And this within six months, please observe, but only after another manager had given me the chance I wanted to play something else than sugary heroines! Strange, isn't it?—but true.

Photos Wrather & Buys.

**Many actresses, Miss Blanche contends, could play the part of Peter Pan, and be equally at home as a dainty fishwife, or in the cap and gown worn by Portia.**

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Joking apart, it seems nowadays that it is a crime to be versatile. If you want to get on you must play one type of part, and one only.

You must make a "corner," so to speak, in gushing flappers, or soured spinsters, or dialect parts, or charwomen, and, having done that, you must be prepared to sit at home and wait, being ruthlessly passed over by managers, until someone writes a new play with a new gushing flapper or soured spinster.

Then there is a rush to old letter-files, and the Powers That Be exclaim with one voice: "Miss Dashblank! Write to her at once! She's just the right girl for it!"

And the play is a failure, so back goes Miss Dashblank to the weary game of waiting, and nobody seems to think that food costs money and that rent must be paid.

"Oh, quite a clever girl, very good in her own line! But this is such a different type of part, I don't like to risk trying her in it!"

I've actually heard those words used over and over again, when the question of casting a play is under discussion. The awful phrase, "her own line," is the death knell of many a brilliant actress—and this applies to actors just as much as wearers of petticoats. It's very rough luck, really.

Acting, one imagined, meant capability to re-create one's own self, in various forms; or to alter oneself entirely to fit an author's creation.

Nowadays, instead of telling a player to *act* a part, managers hunt round till they find someone who actually is that character in herself; or till they dig out someone who played a similar part in the year one, and made a success in it!

Nowadays, to make a success in a decided type of part is fatal to a player! I suppose that sounds absurd; but it is, unfortunately, only too true.

And it will continue to be true, apparently, till we can all run our own theatres, and play the parts we fancy ourselves in, instead of those managers choose to consider our "line." Here is a true story of an actress whose name is quite familiar to you. I have known and admired her for years, and a more brilliant specimen of versatility does not exist. For a long time she played moderately big parts excellently, and drew a comfortable salary. Then one sad day a well-known author wrote a wonderful character part—a

Photo Weather & Rugg.

**There is a great deal of fun to be got out of character parts, says Miss Blanche, but make a success of a comic slavey or shrill-voiced coster and managers will never let you play anything else, save perhaps in revue.**

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common cockney-girl—and she was chosen to play it!

She made a huge success, and in one bound she reached the top of the tree. As long as that play lasted she was in clover—successful and happy, with a fairly good salary, and a public that adored her. But no play lasts for ever, and finally it came off.

For a long time I heard nothing of her, and wondered when and where I should see she was "s.arring." Time went on, and still her name was absent from London playbills.

"Perhaps she is touring in her big part," I thought—till one day I met her. It was an awful shock; she looked shabby, tired, disheartened.

"What's happened to you?" I asked. "I've been expecting to see your name every day—after that big success——"

"My dear, that big success was the worst thing that ever happened to me!" she said gently.

I begged her to explain.

Photos Wrather & Buys.

The ability to look graceful and demure in a crinoline and bonnet does not prevent Miss Blanche from——

——wearing the jaunty uniform of a window-cleaner with just the right air of dash and abandon.

"It stamped me as the creator of a type," she said. "It finished me—except for parts of the same order. They won't give me small things; they won't give me different characters; they forget all the work I did before I played that hateful part. To them I am that part, and that part is me, and until something else comes along very like it I must starve!"

It's not an isolated case, believe me. There are many actors and actresses under the same dreadful curse—the Crime of Versatility.

That is why I believe in revues, for here we get a chance to give thumb-nail sketches wide apart in scope and appearance. In one revue I played eight parts—all different. Not only in dress, but hair, voice, character—everything! I revelled in it

In *Carminetta* I'm wearing a crinoline; and I've always longed to play a real crinoline part, and also a part in the days of powder and patches—like Lady Mary Carlyle in *Monsieur Beaucaire*.

**Because we can sing ragtime, it doesn't follow that we can't make an audience cry—if we are given the chance to try!**

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# The HOMEWARD TRAIL

By H. Mortimer Batten.

*"I tell thee, God is in that man's right hand*
*Whose heart knows when to strike, and when to stay."*

I

Crow Wilson had been in the bush just six months when he struck gold on Little Hog River. Behold him, then, that golden July evening, standing amidst the scowling tamaracks, a ragged, bearded spectre of a man, his moccasined foot upon a white quartz seam, tinted with yellow. He had passed through forest fires, fought his way through miles of almost impenetrable bush, suffered cold, heat, flies, and the eternal solitude, and the six months of silence had bred a certain wild-beast aspect about him, in the ragged and filthy clothing, the unshaven face, and the stoop of the massive shoulders.

But now the man's eyes were bright, and there was a new uprightness in his figure. Here was gold—enough gold to make him thrice a millionaire! The arms of quartz zig-zagged the dome on which he stood, overflowed its edges like miniature torrents, and everywhere were the tints of yellow.

Crow Wilson had stumbled across the seam quite by chance, yet somehow, after all those weeks of fruitless searching, with such dreams as this luring him on, he was in no way surprised at the sudden discovery.

It meant a comfortable home for the Missus—no more working herself to death in keeping the little eating-house going, while he went shadow chasing through the woods. It meant a good school, and later the University for his son, Joe—yes, it meant the great dreams of his life fulfilled regarding the boy's future.

As for himself—well, he guessed he'd lend a hand to one or two of his old chums who had always "just missed it"—Harry Wayland, for instance. Harry had hunted gold for twenty years in these northern forests, but never yet had he struck a real pay streak. Now he was getting old—worn out by exposure and by watching other men, newcomers generally, stumble across gold seams in the very heart of the regions he himself knew like a book.

Suddenly Crow Wilson started up from his dream. Men who have struck gold seams must not dream and dawdle. He was up against the material facts of life, and so, working like a machine, he staked out his claim, fixed the corner posts in their cairns of stones, and engraved his licence number on them. Then he looked up—there was light yet for a good hour's travelling, and so, with eager steps, like a man in a dream, the prospector shouldered his kit and hurried down the incline to his canoe.

Then, as he pushed off, it dawned upon him that this was the homeward journey, the journey back to his wife and boy! Crow Wilson waved his paddle and let forth a wild shout—a shout which filled the silence with such ghostly echoes that he crouched down in his canoe, listening, a vague fear in his eyes.

II

By one of those strange whimsicalities of fate, Crow Wilson, who had seen no living soul, not even an Indian, for six long months, was not alone at that critical moment. A small birchbark canoe had shot suddenly round a bend in the creek half-a-mile above, and the man kneeling in the waist of it heard that wild shout, and saw the speck on the water far ahead. He peered, hawk-like and incredulously from under the tattered brim of his sun hat, then with dexterous strokes of the paddle he swung his canoe into a backwash, well out of Wilson's line of vision.

He, too, was bearded and ragged, while in his eyes and general bearing was that suggestion of the wild beast, which long months of silence and hardship gives to all men. Yet to his subtle judgment the wild shout he had heard could have but one meaning—that the man ahead of him had struck gold, gold which he himself, as usual, had missed by a

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toss of the coin. That was why he crouched and waited; but presently he emerged, plied his paddle, and landed where the other man had landed. Thus, following the tracks, he came to the curiously rounded dome above the creek—saw the many leads of clean white quartz sprinkled richly with yellow, knew that a huge fortune lay at his very feet.

At first it filled him with bewilderment, then with savage anger. These woods were *his!* Had he not searched them from boyhood, suffering cold, hunger, and the eternal silence? Other fools had trespassed, and with the luck of fools had struck what he had missed—always by a hairbreadth!

Then he fell to thinking. The spell was falling upon him. Worn out in body and soul, the visions floated before him. He pictured a little brown-eyed girl, his sole possession, all that meant home to him, seated in a sled amidst crimson cushions and wolverine rugs. He would buy her a piano and decent clothing, he would make a lady of her—the one dream of his life fulfilled. He would send her to college at——

"My God!" The words broke from the man's lips in a hoarse whisper. This claim was not his! It belonged to the other man an hour ahead of him!

Then it was that a savage gleam came into the eyes of Harry Wayland. He blazed the corner posts, and engraved his own licence number on them. Then he hurried back to his canoe, knowing this was a race for a fortune—even for Life!

Darkness had fallen, and two hours later Harry Wayland, suddenly rounding a bend in the creek, came into the full blaze of Crow Wilson's camp fire. He had intended to sneak round unseen, thus getting ahead of his rival; but again his luck was out, for Wilson, having heard the bump of his paddles against the gunwale afar off, hailed him cordially.

"Tumble in, old son, right here," was his greeting. "Guess you're just in time for supper. You can land by the cedar."

Wayland cursed under his breath, but there was nothing for it but to land.

"What you, Harry!" cried Wilson, feeling that wonders would never cease. "You, old son of a gun! How goes it?"

His warm handshake left Wayland for a moment speechless, then with an effort he spoke. "O.K., old pard, 'cept for an overdose of the bush. Kind of got on my nerves this trip."

"How long have you been out?"

"Eight months."

"Gee, that's going it some! I've had six. Couldn't stick another two."

They sauntered to the fire, and while Wayland stretched his weary limbs to the blaze, Wilson busied himself with the half-prepared supper. "But I'm real glad to see you, Harry," he announced, after a long pause. "Truth is, old son, I was thinking about you only an hour ago. I was thinking you were one of the boys I'd set up after my claim's got working——!"

"What, you struck it rich?"

It was more of a demand than an inquiry, and the two ragged men stared into each other's eyes across the firelight.

"I sure have, sonny," replied Wilson, after a pause. "And I was kind of scheming that, after the Missus and the boy are fixed up, you're one of the first men I'll grub-stake. Gee, you were first in, and it's only bad luck that's made you miss it every time."

Crow wondered at his partner's silence during the remainder of the evening, but the hungry mind of Harry Wayland was that night crowded with many schemes. And when the two lay side by side at the camp fire, one to fall asleep with many bright visions, the other to lie awake with dreams unrealised, it was Wayland who, last thing, volunteered to put the on logs.

Harry Wayland was fighting a gigantic battle with himself, and in the firelight floated visions of a wonderful gold seam, backed by himself as founder of a mine, founder of a city—by pictures of a little girl drawn through that city by a fiery steed, while she sat amidst crimson cushions and wolverine furs—*she*, the daughter of the mine owner!

Quietly Harry Wayland rose at length. In this region the fittest must prove their fitness by surviving. Such was his final decision. He packed his gear and launched his canoe, leaving the other man sleeping.

"It's for her sake I'm doing it, Crow," he muttered hoarsely, glancing towards the firelight, yet as the shadows closed upon him came the discomforting thought that he was scheming to rob a friend, into whose kindly soul no taint of suspicion had entered.

Wayland's plans were made out. Weakened by long exposure and shortage of food, he had no stomach for a canoe race. The obvious course was to steal Wilson's canoe and scuttle it; but, while there is no law saying that one woodsman must not jump another's claim, there is an unwritten law, in the strongest code of the woods, which forbids one man tampering with another's canoe. Shoot at him, if you like, spoil his looks, permanently disable him, but the Law of the Trail says that you must not touch his canoe or his food-packs.

Besides, an equally effective plan had occurred to Harry Wayland. He would not

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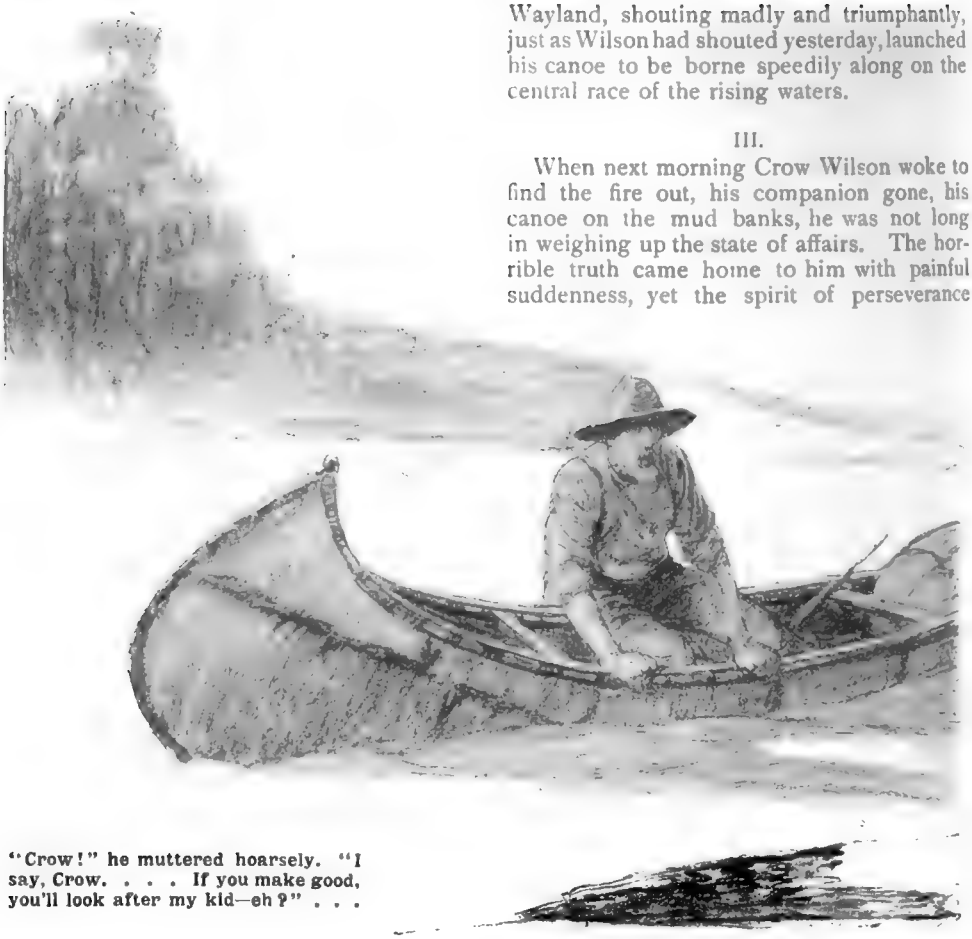

"Crow!" he muttered hoarsely. "I say, Crow. . . . If you make good, you'll look after my kid—eh?" . . .

break the law. The creek for many miles down was rendered possible to navigate only by the existence of a beaver-dam at the foot of Kippawa Sloughs, and that night Wayland strained every muscle to reach the dam before dawn.

As he neared it the creek widened out into a series of sloughs or dead arms, and amidst this maze many a capable woodsman has lost himself for days.

With the unerring judgment of a life spent on the creeks, Wayland followed the true course, located the main dam, and carefully placed his last sticks of dynamite.

The dam here was wide and many centuries old, representing the ceaseless energies of countless generations of beavers, yet it could not withstand that mighty blow delivered in its very centre. With a deafening roar it was rent asunder, and the black waters swooped through, bearing the two remaining arms of the structure bodily away now that the arch was broken.

Rapidly the level of the sloughs sank, and Wayland, shouting madly and triumphantly, just as Wilson had shouted yesterday, launched his canoe to be borne speedily along on the central race of the rising waters.

III.

When next morning Crow Wilson woke to find the fire out, his companion gone, his canoe on the mud banks, he was not long in weighing up the state of affairs. The horrible truth came home to him with painful suddenness, yet the spirit of perseverance which had led him so often into the lonely places was not to be broken.

Obviously he must abandon his canoe, but tucked under the end thwart of that canoe were his snow-shoes, which he donned. Then shouldering his kit, he set out to walk over the mud of the river-bed and to the point at which the creek again became navigable, where he would build a raft.

It took Crow Wilson about ten seconds to come to this extraordinary decision, and ten minutes later behold him, whistling merrily to keep his spirits up, floundering over the treacherous mud of the creek-bed in his huge backwoods snow-shoes.

"But for real heavy going," he told himself, "this beats all creation!"

As for Harry Wayland, he was in still greater difficulties. For a time the driving current bore him on at gratifying speed. Steadily the creek rose, then suddenly it began to fall. His speed quickened—he fled on. He did not notice that the creek had regained its normal level, and was now

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sinking below it. Even when the mud-banks on either side began to show, he did not grasp the true state of affairs.

Faster and faster the canoe swept on; then suddenly the horrifying truth dawned upon him. The suddenly-released weight of water had burst the dam lower down, and the fate he had designed for Wilson now awaited him also! In a few minutes he, too, would be stranded on the mud-banks with a useless canoe!

Too late he hung on—putting off the undesirable moment of landing as long as possible. When at last he decided that the game was up it was too late to land. Slimy banks now reared up on either side, and, stepping out, he sank to the knees, almost upsetting his frail craft at the unexpectedness of it.

He pushed off and tried again—again and again he tried, but always with the same result. The mud would not bear him! Then he sat down and cursed his everlastingly bad luck, while his canoe slowly sank into the thickening slime of the creek basin. He was hopelessly stranded on the mud-banks!

**The man in the snow-shoes turned at last. He paused a moment hesitatingly. Then again he . . . swung on. "Yes!" he shouted over his shoulder.**

IV.

It was near upon sundown when Wilson, floundering under his heavy load, hove in sight. Wilson saw the stranded canoe, and began to whistle in a shrill treble: "Now We Shan't be Long!"

Opposite the canoe, without looking at it, he paused to adjust his packs. Wayland looked at him beseechingly. Wayland had no snow-shoes.

"Crow!" he muttered hoarsely. "I say, Crow!"

By way of response Wilson struck up with "We shan't be home till morning!" in the same shrill treble, and floundered on.

"Crow! I've broken my paddle! I'm dead beat! This mud won't hold me!"

Still Crow shuffled ahead, a sense of evil triumph at his soul.

"Say, Crow! If you make good, you'll look after my kid—eh?" It was a last desperate appeal.

The man in the snow-shoes turned at last. He paused a moment hesitatingly. Then again he readjusted his packs and swung on. "Yes!" he shouted over his shoulder.

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And the man in the stranded canoe hid his face.

Crow Wilson registered his claim, embraced the plump, little proprietress of the eating-house, cuffed his son's ear affectionately, then set out again for the woods, saying that he must get samples. He took two white men and an Indian with him—drove them to their last ounce of energy with promises of huge reward.

They found Wayland in the very spot Wilson had left him—*if this* were Wayland, this wide-eyed, motionless wretch cowering in the waist of the stranded canoe!

As Crow looked upon the scene, the terrible realism of the thing he had done dawned upon him. Was this Wilson—this ghastly apparition clinging with long fingers to the gunwale of the canoe, while it stared, with haunted, hawk-like eyes, straight ahead into the gloom of the waterway?

Wilson's orders were brief but to the point. They were to the effect that trees were to be felled to span the stretch of mud between the bank and the canoe. But as the ring of the axes sang out, breaking the all-absorbing silence, the man in the canoe was seen to shudder.

"All right, Betty!" It was a strangely hollow and ghost-like voice that stabbed the stillness, and the talons that clutched the gunwale of the canoe tightened their grip for another effort. "I'm coming to you, my pretty!" the hollow echoes rang out. "Hold on another day! I'll get there! That devil Wilson shan't rob us!"

Between each sentence the echoes fled forth and died—a multitude of ghost whispers. The tone, the ghastly punctuation, conveyed far more than the actual words.

Crow Wilson hid his eyes. "My God!" he muttered. And again he said, "My God!"

It was many weeks later. Harry Wayland lay in his bunk, while a dark-eyed little girl, dressed in the blue and scarlet so much favoured by the French-Canadian, quietly busied herself about the shanty.

"He's awake now, sir," said the child at length, addressing the gaunt-limbed, hollow-eyed woodsman who dawdled on the verandah. "I guess you can see him, if you want."

But as the gaunt-limbed man strode towards the door, the child, on her way to the edge of the clearing to chop firewood, darted a glance at him which bespoke the quick strike of the rattlesnake, with all its slowly percolating venom.

Crow Wilson stooped over Wayland's bunk. Their eyes met—slowly their hands met also. A faint smile of understanding passed between them.

"I, too, had a kid to think of!" said the sick man presently.

The grip of the other tightened. Both knew the awful pinch of the northland—the silence, the damp, the hunger. Both knew only too well that the sight of gold turned a man's head after long months of fruitless searching with only the dreams to follow.

"We have both suffered, old man," said Crow Wilson.

Again the faint smile passed between them.

"The claim?" muttered the sick man eagerly. "How has it panned out, Crow?"

The woodsman stretched his legs as though the inquiry bored him.

"As one might expect," he answered. "Guess I'll own a city in a year or so! The mine promises to be great. All I want is a practical man who knows the sight of gold when he sees it. Say——?"

But there was no need to put the question. The two shook hands silently over the deal. And outside the little blue-and-scarlet girl let off steam by braying away at a poplar log which would *not* split, and which would never make firewood if it did.

## THE SPOILS OF WAR.

I carried off a ripping German he'met at the Somme;
I carried off a pris'ner at the Aisne;
I was nearly carried off, myself, at Arras by a bomb,
So I got a "Blighty," and I'm home again.
I've carried off a shoulder-full of shrapnel. Cheerio!
So I cannot say that Fortune's been adverse,
But the jolliest of all the spoils of war will be, you know,
(Yes, she's promised!) when I carry off my nurse!

Ethel Talbot.

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# WILL THE SKIRT GO?

If her mirror tells her that she can successfully wear trousers, the woman of the future may possibly discard her skirts and request her tailor to supply her with man's attire.

By Max Pemberton.

**Since the war denuded us of our men, women have been tackling masculine jobs, which by their very nature demand masculine attire. Is the alacrity with which they have taken to trousers an indication that the skirt is doomed? This is the question discussed in the following article by Mr. Max Pemberton, the celebrated author, who suggests that a modified form of trousers may possibly oust the skirt, provided they can be made sufficiently becoming.**

One thing seems to be certain. Woman will not go back to Victorian frills and flounces. And she will not fall over her skirt if she can help it.

Consider how much she has done for herself since the war broke out! Men never knew anything about her, and never will, perhaps, but they have discovered some things since Wilhelm put on the shining armour.

To begin with, she has not within the memory of man been seen to such advantage. For hundreds of years she hid her charms, and an absurd convention made it possible for her to uncover her neck but to hide her ankles. The American at the dinner-party who was asked what he thought of the dresses of the Englishwomen who were present, replied that he could not tell as he had not looked under the table. That was just the truth of it. And to-day the same woman who tells you that the short skirt is shocking, will cheerfully dance down a sea beach in a costume which brings every telescope to a focus. Truly, shall we never understand them! Nor does history help us to do so.

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Even in the primitive days of old, when skins were the fashion, men and women in all probability fought for the right to wear the same garment.

Women came from the East, and the forbears of "Lucille" dealt in assorted leaves. For a while man and woman must have fought for the same skin—but the woman got it, be sure! Then followed, after ten centuries, the combat for possession—fire and sword and the jealousy of tenure. Man proposed to woman with a hatchet in his hand, and when he had caught her he made love to her in the dungeons of castles. But he was by no means anxious that others should do the same, and in the East he veiled her so that marauding became a lottery. You were never certain that you were out after "the goods," and the disappointment of the elderly gentleman who chased a flapper of sixty down Regent Street was as nothing to the anger of the Kurd who carried off the grandmother in mistake for the niece.

Yet there are still those who can say that the veiled woman is wholly charming, and hides in the riddle of her eyes the story of many mysteries.

It needed the nineteenth century and the "bloomer" to wake humanity up. What a sensation attended those pictures in *Punch* more than fifty years ago. Women in trousers, and such trousers! Heaven forbid that we shall ever see their like again.

I was in Paris in the nineties when we saw the "bloomers" again. The bicycle followed them, and the ladies of the incomparable city took to them like ducks to water. Every day in the Bois you would see hundreds of fair cyclists showing their ankles to the multitude and remaining unashamed. The French cartoonists delighted in the thing. We had legs as many as hop-poles in Kent. And everybody said: "This is final; women will never go back upon it." So little did they know the mind of woman!

Perhaps it would be fair to say that it was the bicycle rather than the trousers which first gave up the ghost. Society got very tired of pedalling itself along. Horses were brought from the stable again, and the craze burst like a child's balloon.

We, as mere men, understood that the breeches went with it, though there were dark hints that in many cases they were merely covered. The women themselves had found a new fashion, and sport encouraged its perpetuation. But from the revolutionary point of view the thing was epoch-making. No longer were there breeches, but the divided skirt took their place. Freaks of all kinds appeared in our

What a sensation was caused when convention was flung to the winds and the "bloomer" made its bow to a startled world! Many there were who prophesied in those days that woman would never again consent to be the slave of the petticoat.

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streets. We saw women so tightly "hobbled" that they had to make leaps from the pavement to the footboard of the omnibus—feet close together, and a prayer for safety on their lips.

After this the upward progression was easy. Astonished London came face to face with the short skirt, and leant against the lamp-post to gasp. What revelation was this? What traffic with hidden things? And not always, mind you, to the advantage of the exhibitor. We, as mere males, had existed upon imagination for generations, and now we realised the old adage about the things unseen. What the eye cannot perceive the heart does not lust after—and do you remember Phil May's omnibus conductor, who said to the old lady as she climbed to the roof and tried to hide her ankles: "Don't you be afraid, mum, it ain't no bloomin' treat?" Let us confess under pressure that the short skirt has not always been a "bloomin' treat," and leave it at that.

Now, this was the state of things until the dawn of this year of grace, 1917. We had thrown much of the skirt to the winds, and the winds had thrown what was left towards the sky. When the spring came we discovered that several reefs had been let down, and the mainsail, as it were, enlarged.

But just as Charles Lamb made up for arriving late frequently by leaving early as often, so was this additional canvas atoned for by retrenchment in other quarters. Women found war vocations in which they rejoiced. We had V.A.D.'s and women police patrols. The land called the widows and the virgins, and they went forth in man's attire. Even sweeps and cleaners and motor engineers were to be seen in the West-end looking for all the world like girls from a French revue, but also with the imprint of their calling to mar their finery.

When fashion decreed that the "hobble-skirt" should become an inmate of the rag-bag, astonished London came face to face with the short and ample variety, and leant against the lamp-post to gasp.

All were the pioneers of a movement which we are told is to be permanent. The breeches have come to stay, say the enthusiasts, and it may be that they are right. Yet certainly not the breeches with which we are familiar.

No longer is the wearing of trousers the prerogative of man, for the women who are doing men's work are also donning masculine attire. Garments reminiscent of revue are cropping up in all quarters, though their finery is sometimes marred by the imprints of the fair worker's calling.

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Heaven forbid that those should remain among us!

Personally I think that the sex will evolve something far more picturesque, though it may still be in the nature of trousers. If a man were asked to draw a picture of what is desirable, he would in the majority of cases plead for some fashion of skirt if it were but a suggestion. Nothing is uglier than a woman dressed in the clothes of man as we know them. If she wear them successfully, as Vesta Tilley and others can do, it is because she is apt in ceasing to be a woman and in putting on the airs and the disgraces of the other sex.

And while her advance guard is calling for the trousers, be it noted that men themselves have recently been advocating their abolition. Puttees and breeches, we are told, are much more comfortable and bishops are blessed of the gods. The movement at one time appeared to have some weight of public opinion behind it, but it petered out sadly in the end when the advocates of trousers bombed the evening's entrenchments and took them at a gallop. It remains to be seen whether women in their turn will rise up as one man and cry: "Great are the ready-mades of the Ephesians!" It may come to it in the end.

And, of course, it may be that they do not really take trousers to their hearts at all, and are merely wearing them as a matter o expediency They may be ready to tell us that they are prepared to sell such adornments to Mr. Morris Angel directly peace is declared, and that they have worn them merely because they are best suited to the new work they have undertaken. In that case they will embrace the skirt—shall we say with both arms? But it is difficult to believe that it will differ greatly from the skirts we have known recently—and are we not told by Parisiennes that they have routed and put to flight utterly the creators of the "barrel" variety which was to have been the fashion this year?

If our sisters and our cousins and our aunts are to wear trousers, let an artist design them. Much could be done with bagginess and bows, and surely there should be a splash of colour somewhere? The dresses that we had last summer in effect were kilts, and I suppose that, for mere comfort, fashion has not bettered them.

It is for the women themselves to tell us how they like the latest thing at a guinea a pair, and what is their opinion of what Sam Weller called a "red flannel weskit." The final test in their case must infallibly be one of effect. If women do not look well in the trousers, they will never wear them. And if men on the whole dislike to see their womenkind so attired, the crusade is doomed from the start.

Of course, there will be some to urge that man's opinion does not count, and all that really matters is the considered judgment of the women. This is a revolutionary age, and utility the final arbiter. The woman of the future will wear the clothes in which she can best do the things she is now called upon to do. There will not be enough husbands to go round, and so the sex must take refuge in a passion of achievement which calls for activity and for labour.

For my part, I do not believe a word of it. All is vanity, sings the prophet, and vanity will buy them at the tailor's if the glass says they are all right. This possibly they can be made, and the costumier must look to it. We, as men, will wait and see. Nor shall we forget the poet who has reminded us of our true part in this drama of the world and who has said:

"The man's a fool who tries by force or skill
To stem the current of a woman's will;
For if she will, she will, ye may depend on 't,
And if she won't, she won't, and there's an end on 't."

## HOLDING CAPACITY

Priscilla has a sable muff—
I gave it her last Christmas Day;
She chose the largest in the shop—
What mattered it? *I* had to pay!
A muff of such capacious size,
It dwarfed all other muffs I knew;
In my own mind I felt convinced
Priscilla's muff was made for two.

And sometimes in a taxicab,
Or when the lights are very low,
My hand steals in the muff as well—
(A fellow's hands get cold, you know!),
And if our fingers chance to meet,
As somehow they seem bound to do,
I know my instinct was not wrong—
Priscilla's muff *is* made for two!

Rosemary North.

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# "V.A.D." (VOLUNTARY & DELIGHTFUL)

By Christine Jope-Slade.

*"True love's the gift which God has given*
*To man alone beneath the heaven."*

I.

"I'm so sorry, Mummie. I know it's awfully nice, but I don't think I can touch it! I'm so tired I could sleep for a million years," and then the sound of sobbing and somebody consoling and comforting, footsteps, and then silence.

The man in the flat below threw down his pen and paced the wee room, hands in pockets.

He was a large, muscular person with stubby red hair and a jaw so strong and pugilistic that it seemed to jut out from the rest of his long, lean, brown face; his ears were rather large, his nose was long and aquiline—an aristocrat among noses—and his eyes were light, twinkling hazel, fringed with what seemed double the amount of eyelashes usually owned by one individual.

"Lot of rot!" he muttered irritably, "working the kid to death. Probably lives on her nerves. Pretty patriotic to carry on. Up at five every morning. Worse than the trenches. No fun when she does come home. Poor as church mice, I bet. Pretty putrid job being a woman, Mud."

An animal of variegated ancestry wagged an acquiescent tail and regarded him lovingly.

The man turned out the electric light and sat down before the fire.

"I feel horrible," he confided to Mud. "I know her S.O.S. signals aren't even meant for me, but I've caught 'em. I can't disregard 'em, what? She's a V.A.D., by her uniform.



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My word, when I remember how the old Commandant used to make 'em hop it in our little show I don't wonder she's tired out!"

The dog still regarded him lovingly and licked his hand—dog instinct is an unfathomable thing; maybe Mud knew he was thinking of that left hand that wasn't any more.

"No fun, no friends, no pretty-pretties, no chocolates—no nothing," said the big man thoughtfully. "Rather a washout, what? One must do something. This comes of living in cheap flats, Mud—jerry-built mansions with paper partitions and collapsible ceilings. Oh, but yes!"—he pulled the dog's soft, long ears—"but where else could we find the blessed quiet, Mud? Not in any fashionable flats."

He watched the orange flicker of firelight dance brilliantly about the charming room, over the buff-coloured walls where wonderful Brangwyn etchings hung, on the ridiculously thick, soft, tobacco-coloured carpet, over the great armchairs covered in tobacco velvet, on the exquisite old desk, the brown pottery vases crowded with early daffodils, which were the only note of colour in the room.

Mud growled, and he rose.

"It's all right, old son," he said soothingly. "It's only Ainsworth."

The man who followed him in laughed.

"No lights! Been dreaming over the fair unknown upstairs? Bet he has, hasn't he, Mud? Oh, you incurable sentimentalist!" He slapped his host on the back affectionately, his pleasant voice a little mocking and impatient. "There's no hope for you writers; you're unstable, impulsive, quixotic—you get knocked out by the first bit of wistful——"

"Shut up, Ain," ordered the big man abruptly; his chin, absurdly jutting, made a grotesque black shadow on the buff wall as he stood in the firelight. "It sort of gets you. To-night she——" He shrugged and stared into the fire. "I've never heard anyone go upstairs, not even the post-girl. They do all their own housework. To-night she was too tired to eat; that's bad, you know. I used to feel like that before success came."

"I wish to goodness the beastly flat had remained empty. It was empty for six months. Why don't you move, Stuart? Fancy a fellow who's raking in £2,000 a year making his pals come to Camden Town to see him in a £26-a-year flat in a back street, with taxi-drivers the very deuce and 'buses overcrowded."

"It's quiet, and I like it. I find I can write here."

"Seems to me you spend your time worrying about a girl who's working no harder than many thousands of other girls—probably had a soft time up till now and is feeling it. My dear Stuart, I'm not asking you to be grossly material—it wouldn't be in keeping with your profession—but do be mildly reasonable, old sport. I suppose she's as pretty as paint?"

"I've never seen her face. I followed her downstairs one day and she was wearing some sort of uniform—V.A.D., I think. There are so many about nowadays."

"She may be as old as the hills and as ugly as sin."

"That doesn't alter the fact that she's a woman on the verge of a breakdown."

"Probably doesn't feed properly—bun and milk idea. If women would only get the steak-and-chips habit half the doctors in London would be hunting for a job."

"Steak is expensive; they are terribly poor."

"You seem to be well up in their affairs. What are you going to do, send her anonymous Bovril or secret Sanatogen?"

"Both are jolly good when you're run down."

"Oh, quit it. Here, I say, I went to see *Chu Chin Chow* last night. There's a most delightful cobbler's song in it. Where's the piano? Here, I say!"

"Not to-night," said Stuart Wemyss imperturbably, barring the way.

"Mustn't disturb her sweet slumber, I suppose?"

"That's about the size of it!" was the tranquil response.

II.

"Box for you, dearie."

"I expect it's my new overalls."

"I don't think so."

"Undo it, Mumsie, I'm in a fearful hurry."

The girl swallowed the last drop of cocoa, made with sweetened condensed milk and water, and demolished the last bit of toast and margarine.

"Somebody must have left it outside. It's too early for the post-girl; besides, it hasn't been stamped."

"Maybe it's not for us." The girl was putting on her hat before the glass.

"It's got 'Miss Cullum' on right enough. Oh, Coral!"

Coral Cullum swung round, startled. The table was ablaze with the daffodils her mother had tipped out of the big box—fifty, sixty, nearly a hundred there must have been.

"Oh!" she echoed. "How beautiful!"

The gas gave a sudden flicker and went out.

"Here's a shilling for the meter, dear," the girl said.

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"We needn't put it in now. It's quite light."

The elder woman drew back the thick curtains and the pale dawn filtered in. In the cold light the gold of the flowers seemed almost to blaze.

"One could warm one's hands by them," said the girl. "Who on earth can have sent them?"

"I'll have them all arranged by to-night, dear. Must you go? Maybe there's a card somewhere."

"Keep it for me to see to-night, darling. Good-bye."

The man standing in the room below in pale blue silk pyjamas and a blue-and-brown bath-gown smiled to himself.

He had heard her little high, clear, surprised "How beautiful!"

He listened to quick feet running past his door and down the narrow stairs.

He looked at the expectant Mud.

"Maybe you're right, old chap," he said. "Tisn't worth while going back to bed."

He went to the window and pulled aside the thick buff goats'-hair curtains. As he did so he saw a small, scurrying, blue-clad figure turn the bend.

"It's all very well for us," he apostrophised the variegated hound. "We do it once in a way. She does it every morning, my son, up at five o'clock! I haven't the moral courage to slink back to bed. We'll go for a walk."

Into Coral Cullum's hard-working life there entered the essentials of human well-being—expectation and excitement.

Stuart Wemyss provided both, and his sole reward was the ghost of a youthful laugh, surely a reward insufficient enough to prove him that rare thing—a deliberate philanthropist.

He lent a glamour, a thrill; he inserted possibilities into two lives that had been singularly barren of any.

It was not his Sanatogen and his Bovril, his grapes and his flowers alone that brought colour to Coral Cullum's small, piquant face or brightened the brown eyes that always seemed too big and soft and shining for their colourless background.

Men talk about the fourth dimension. The happiest women possess a fourth dimension in their own lives. They never seek to analyse it—it is the unknown. The happiest woman is the one whose husband remains the fourth dimension.

Stuart Wemyss represented Coral's.

"You are in love with her," said Ainsworth, watching him pack an exquisite box of chocolates tied with broad blue ribbons.

"How can I be in love with her when I have never seen her face?" he answered impatiently.

"'Generosity and philanthrophy are forms of self-indulgence common to the least analytical of the community,'" he quoted from one of Stuart's books.

"It's perfectly true," acquiesced the author soberly. "It's the most tremendous pleasure to me to do this. I sit here, after the post-girl has been here and then been up there, and I try to imagine her face when she opens the things. It is the most enormous pleasure to me. It's awfully novel, too. I've never had the chance to give before, except pennies and subscriptions and things, and that's so fearfully impersonal."

"And you don't want to see the girl?"

"I do and I don't. You know, I should feel so fearfully embarrassed; besides, I don't get the chance. She leaves at 5.30, and if I tried to barge into her at that hour she'd suspect; and she comes home about eight, and they don't give us any light in the passage since the new lighting regulations, so I couldn't see her face."

"Send them two tickets for some play and sit next to them. You can see what they're like then; and they'll never suspect. I'll come with you."

"No you won't, Ain," said the young man thoughtfully. "Not even if I—do it."

III.

Should he go? Should he not?

It was half-past seven.

He heard them go downstairs—laughter, a word or two.

"The first play I've been to for two years. I feel like an excited child."

He'd go! No, he wouldn't!

He opened the front door cautiously, and Mud, who had followed him, bolted between his long legs and down the stairs. He called angrily: "Mud, Mud!" He might have known! Mud always did that. His plebeian ancestry revealed itself in an indelicate curiosity with regard to other people's dust-bins.

He went back into the empty flat: the pretty buff room was full of soft blue twilight and soft blue Roman hyacinths in earthenware bowls, but it failed to entice him.

He sought an adequate excuse to stay at home. Mud would have provided one; Mud was disconsolate while he was away, but Mud was swashbuckling in insanitary areas.

He decided to go to the theatre.

In three minutes, nervous of his own decision, he was in a taxi rattling along Tottenham Court Road.

The first act was half-way through when

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he took his seat—his heart racing absurdly. His number happened to be the last of a row, next to a gangway, He dropped into it quite quietly; the girl at his side was hardly aware of his advent.

"It's all very improbable and a little vulgar," she was saying.

He was aware of a curious chill, a sense of profound disappointment, almost of dismay. She was ultra-suburban, super-refined. She minced her words.

"Oh, I think it is charming!" said her companion a little pitifully, rather eagerly, like a child keen to share its pleasure. "A theatre is a great treat to me, dear. I expect that's why I'm not critical."

"I never like to go to an entertainment unless I come away feeling that I have learnt something. I always make a point of doing something worth while—like Shakespeare or Shaw or Ibsen."

The curtain descended, the lights sprang up.

Stuart Wemyss never turned.

He was very, very sick.

He had made a pet of a dream-girl, he had fashioned her out of his fancies, and she had materialised into a type abhorrent to him.

The opportunities for romance in the average man's life are very few, very dear and sparkling and wonderful when they come. Stuart Wemyss had derived a charming pleasure from the presents he had made to the unknown girl upstairs who needed cheering up; it had been a voluntary delight. His reward had been a medley of fascinating mental pictures and a wealth of pipe-speculation.

He turned abruptly and looked at her.

He saw a wealth of neatly-coiled brown hair, a pair of rather prominent brown eyes behind glasses, a pretty nose and mouth and a pale pink blouse.

She was a girlie girl. She liked to be quite sure that a book was nice before she read it, that a joke *was* a joke before she laughed at it, that the poor were "worthy" before she gave them her old clothes, and that wounded "Tommies" were gentlemen before she asked them to tea. She honestly believed that privates made more crumbs than officers.

She dropped her programme.

Stuart Wemyss restored it.

"Thank you so much," she said. Her glance was faintly hostile—it presumed that he might presume.

He was a little puzzled.

He could not conceive her accepting the flowers, the chocolates, or the Bovril without ferreting to discover their source.

He glanced at the elder lady; glimpsed shining eyes of almost youthful delight.

"I don't think she's a womanly woman," the girl was criticising the chief character in the play. "A man likes——"

He rose abruptly and quitted the theatre.

Ain would laugh. His fairy had turned into a housemaid. His delicately-woven fairy tale had become a penny novelette.

He went home in a gloom that was enhanced by the fact that a penitent Mud was not waiting for him on the mat.

He let himself in and slammed the door violently.

IV.

"Are you Mr. Stuart Wemyss?"

"Yes," he answered, and paused. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Your dog," said the clear little voice belonging to the ridiculously slender shadow in the gloom of the narrow passage; and he became aware that it was staggering under a weight. "He has been run over—his jaw. I found him whining on your mat when I came home from the hospital."

"Please come in," he said, absurdly flustered, and turned on all the electric lights.

She staggered in and deposited Mud on his buff sofa. The little curls—like a baby's first hair—that clustered round her forehead were beaded with moisture; little shiny drops stood on her short upper lip.

"He's very, very heavy," she said breathlessly. "I have bound him up."

Mud was surveying him anxiously—slant-eyed and wistful. He went out swaggering, and came home as if he had been suddenly salved in the height of temptation.

Stuart Wemyss patted the dog and looked at the girl.

Her face was almost snowdrop pale—she was the slightest, tenderest thing his eyes had ever rested on, her brown eyes were very bright and tired.

She wore a brown linen dress and a great big coarse apron with a brown cross in the centre.

"I thought you were at the theatre," he said suddenly—and saw what a silly ass he was by her little scarlet, distressed face and dismayed eyes.

"Oh," she cried sharply, "then it was *you!*"

He grew red, too. His face and his neck burnt. He had never felt so small and ashamed in all his life.

"It was such a pleasure," he babbled a little incoherently. "You don't know. Are you awfully mad? Do you think I'm a rotten sort of bounder?"

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"Your dog," said the clear little voice. . . . "He has been run over—his jaw. I found him whining on the mat when I came home from the hospital."

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"You sent the flowers?" she queried. "And the chocolates? And the Bovril?"

He nodded, his head downcast.

"Sometimes I used to hear you say how tired you were—the—walls are very thin—and it seemed so rotten for a woman to be so tired—and not be able to eat. I wanted to make things easier. I'd never seen either of you, so you see how absolutely impersonal it was. I don't know quite why I did it—it was a sort of selfish sentiment at first—absolutely abstract. To-night I went to the theatre."

"I couldn't go," she said. "Mother took a cousin. I cook at the hospital—and Thursdays I have to cook supper for the staff, too. Oh," she said in a sort of burst, "you don't know how glad I am it is *you!*"

"I am glad it is me, too," he said quite simply.

"Oh, but you don't understand!" Her vivid colour arrested him; he watched it flame and die away. "There is a R.A.M.C. Captain at the hospital on the staff. I thought he sent them. I was nice to him, and I don't like him. I tried awfully hard to tell him he must not send me any more things, and I wasn't strong enough—or big enough. It's pretty beastly to—to be like that. I tried to be big—and—and life was so dull without the chocolates and magazines and flowers. The flat seemed so bare. I tried to tell myself it was for Mother, and that when life is—is as unluxurious as ours one has a right to the good things the gods send. You feel rotten when you start lying to yourself. I felt worst of all when I had to be nice to the Captain in—in exchange. I needn't any more." She stopped suddenly. "Of course, there's you," she faltered.

Mud licked her hand.

"Of course, there's me," he said. "In a way I've had a tremendous reward—it's just that you're not your cousin. It would have been horrible if you had been your cousin."

"I expect you're an artist or something," she said very quietly. "Only someone who thought an awful lot would have bothered about two women who were—strangers. In a way it's been—charity."

"To me," he said.

"I ought to feel ashamed—the chocolates are eaten, and the flowers are faded. I can never return them."

"I like to think you cannot return them."

"You won't go on sending things?" she pleaded. "I couldn't bear it—now I know."

"Not until you give me permission," he returned steadily.

"I think I'll go back now," she said. "I shall pretend to be asleep when they come in. I don't want to talk about the play; I want to think this over. I don't know quite what—what attitude to take up."

"Is the attitude necessary?" he said very humbly, looking into her tired, perplexed eyes.

"I—I don't quite know. I must find out."

"When you have found out will you tell me what it is?"

Her glance was very grave and considering.

He could not guess that she was deeming him the best man God had ever made. He could not guess that she was going upstairs to cry because he was such a perfect dear.

"Will it take you long to—to get an attitude?"

She could not guess that he was wondering reverently what it would feel like to have her in his arms; speculating as to whether the R.A.M.C. bounder had ever kissed her.

"Not—not so very long."

"When may I know it? Will it be formulated by to-morrow evening?"

"You may come and—and—see," she said.

When she had gone he tried to light a cigarette.

"That," he said to the watchful Mud—"that is what they do to you—women." He surveyed his trembling hand and laughed. "That's what they do to you, old sport." The match went out.

## PRIVILEGED!

Happy winds that can caress
Delia when she walks abroad
No conventions to transgress
Happy winds that can caress
am envious, I confess,
Yet the test I can't afford.
Happy winds that can caress
Delia when she walks abroad.

Roland Goodchild.

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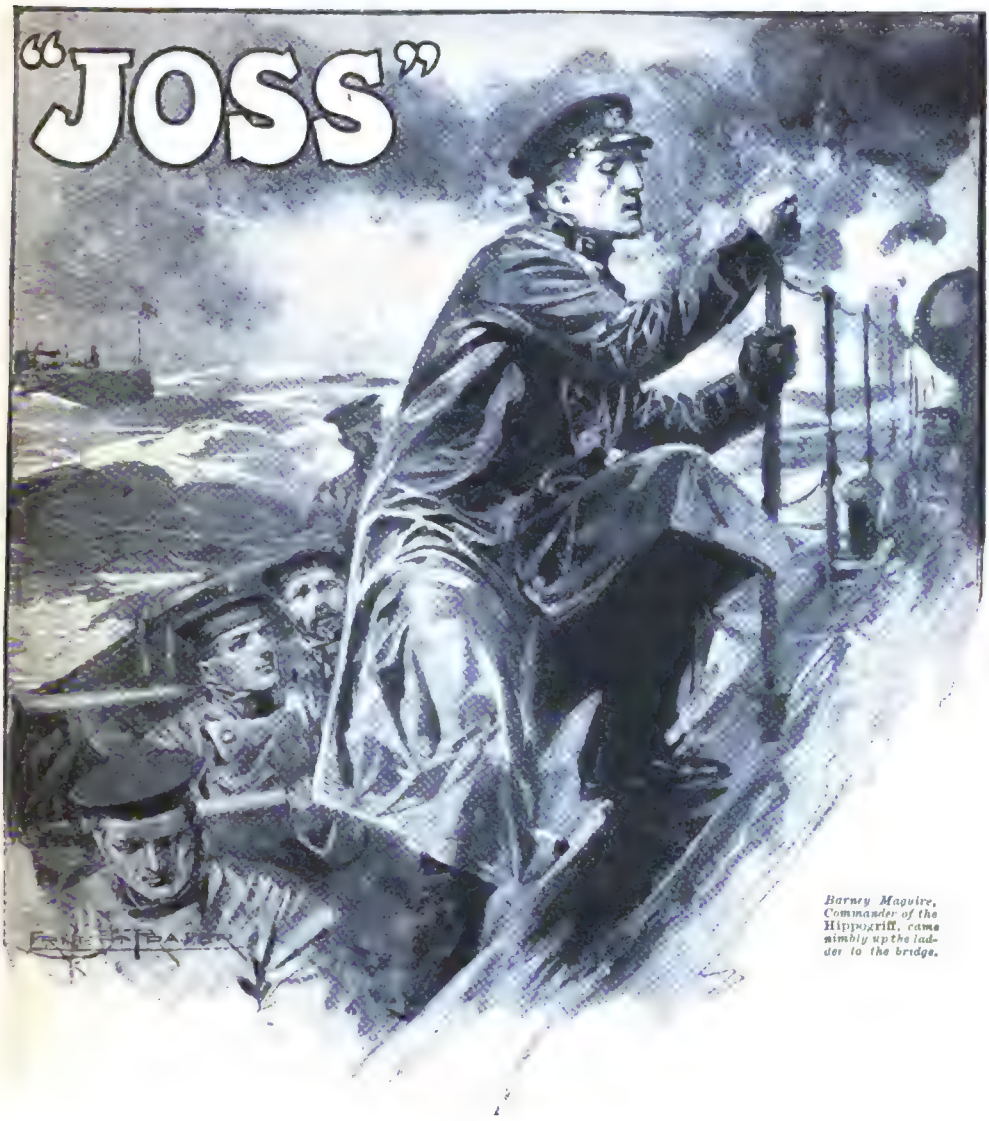


*Barney Maguire, Commander of the Hippogriff, came nimbly up the ladder to the bridge.*

By Francis V. Smith.

". . 'Joss,' which is luck, fortune, destiny, the irony of Fate, or Nemesis, is the greatest of all the battle-gods that move upon the water."—Rudyard Kipling.

His Majesty's destroyer *Hellion*, second in a line of six sister ships, slugged her black nose into a heavy sea for the fiftieth time that morning, and "took it green" from bow to bridge. Lieutenant-Commander Barrington ducked behind the canvas dodger that screened the bridge just too late to avoid a spurt of cold spray, which stung like nettles. Not less than half-a-pint of it found its way down the neck of his oilskins.

"This," said the officer, shivering, "is the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet. My last dry shirt, too! What do we think of patrolling, Troddles?"

"Wait till the signalman goes away," grunted Lieutenant Mortimer, the second-in-command. "He's much too young to hear what I think of it. *I* haven't owned a dry shirt for days!"

But the signalman, who stood near them on the narrow bridge, had stiffened into the rigidity of alert attention, for the flotilla-leader, next ahead, was signalling.

"I knew it," said Barrington sadly, scanning

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the damp signal-pad which was thrust into his hand. "'Increase speed to thirty knots.' In this sea! Unfeeling beggar, the Commodore. I shall part company with my breakfast if she goes on pitching like this!"

"Smoke on the port bow, sir," from the look-out, and both officers levelled their glasses.

"Calm yourself, Troddles; it isn't Fritz," said Barrington, who was a man of many disappointments, noting a youthful flush of excitement on Mortimer's cheeks. "If it isn't one of our sweepers, it's a fishmonger, an' if not it's a Swedish tramp or something out of Bergen with timber—but it's *never* Fritz!"

"Something out of Bergen has four funnels, then, and seems fairly speedy for a tramp," declared Mortimer drily. "Wipe your glasses an' look again, Barrington!"

"It *is* Fritz," said Barrington beneath levelled binoculars. "After all these years! Troddles, I apologise!"

"Attack enemy destroyers eight miles to E.N.E.," signalled the flotilla-leader.

"Destroyers, eh?" cried Barrington. "By gum, the Commodore's got his eyes skinned; there are three of 'em. The more the merrier! 'Action stations,' please, Troddles."

The word was passed, and within a minute eighty men who had waited for this chance through many weary months of patrolling were ready at their posts.

"Wonder if they'll fight?" said Mortimer, but his Commander gave vent to a hollow groan, followed by several high-temperature Navy-pattern remarks, for the enemy had swung round to the north-east, and dashed away at a speed which left no doubt of the issue.

"An' we'd mop 'em up in ten minutes if only we could get within range!" wailed Barrington. "*Why* did I sell my farm an' come to sea?"

"*Hellion* and *Hippogriff* will manœuvre independently and attack enemy destroyer, closing from S.S.E.," signalled the Commodore.

"Wow!" cried Barrington, swinging round in the direction named.

A light mist veiled the southward horizon, and from it another German destroyer had appeared, steaming at top speed, with the evident intention of working round ahead of the British flotilla and joining her companions before she was cut off. Instantly, *Hellion* and *Hippogriff*—next astern—turned out of line and shaped a course to intercept her, while the remaining destroyers closed up and continued on their course.

"This is where we come in!" chuckled Barrington. "If he holds that course two minutes more he's our bird." At that moment the German came to the same conclusion; he gave up the attempt to join his consorts, swung round to southward, and showed *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* a very clean pair of heels.

"Give him a shot, Sexton!" cried Barrington, and the gunner in charge of the bow four-inch quick-firer saluted, and applied an experienced eye to his gunsight. Officially he was known as "Seaman-gunner Andrew Sexton, 456731," but the whole flotilla knew his worth, and appreciated him as an artist in gunnery and a consummate master of his gun.

"*Wump!*" said the four-inch gun, and a white splash leapt into the air a hundred yards short of the German. The second shot was nearer; the third and fourth went over, but the fifth was perfect; the shell got fairly home on the German's deck, and a billowing cloud of steam told that it had found one at least of his boilers.

"Lovely shot!" murmured Barrington. "That chap Sexton's a bally wizard! Are we gaining, Troddles?"

"Dunno'!" said Mortimer, who was squinting through a sextant at the enemy. "Confound it, no! We're just holding the beggar, an' that's all."

It was a humiliating fact; the speedy German, with one boiler disabled, was still as fast as the British destroyers with all their boilers in full blast. Nor was there any further chance for the redoubtable Sexton, for now they had the wind right ahead, and the enemy's smoke—he was burning coal—made shooting impossible at long range. Speed was the only hope, but although *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* strained their boilers to the uttermost the German kept his distance. Far to the southward they ran into waters which they had not seen since the beginning of the war, but never a cable's length did they gain. And at last the German got his damaged boiler into working order again, increased his speed until he was a mere blur on the horizon, and they gave up the hopeless chase.

"We never see anything but their tails!" growled Barrington savagely. "If the blighters could only fight half as well as they run, we'd have our work cut out. Nothing to show for a two-hundred-mile run, an' now——"

"*B-r-r-r-oom — poom — poom — poom!*" came a mighty voice over the water from the north-west, a vast sound, menacing, elemental, tremendous. It struck the ears with the force of a physical blow; every wire and stay quivered, and the glass cover of the chart-

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table jingled faintly. The two officers, their disappointment instantly forgotten, turned to each other with a fierce joy in their eyes, and both spoke at the same moment.

"*They're out!*"

The crash of heavy guns could mean nothing else. The German battle-fleet had put to sea, and away over the horizon a great naval battle was beginning. Again and again the big guns spoke, and the air trembled with the roar of firing.

"Coming aboard!" signalled *Hippogriff*, increasing her speed and running alongside her consort. Both ships stopped, and *Hippogriff's* whaler splashed into the water and pulled rapidly to *Hellion's* side. Barney Maguire, Commander of the *Hippogriff*, came nimbly up the ladder to the bridge. He was a red-headed Hibernian, with twinkling blue eyes and a combative jaw, and he loved a fight better than the breath of life.

"Barry, darling," he began, with an insinuating grin, "there's the makings of a beautiful scrap over yonder, an' I'm thinking we're wasted here. What's the orders?"

"'Tisn't our funeral, Barney," said Barrington, a trifle bitterly. "Leave it to the Fleet, dear boy. *We* belong on patrol duty."

"But man, dear, it's the chance of a lifetime. Just hark at 'em!" wailed Barney.

To judge by the din, a dozen big ships were fighting hammer and tongs, and between the thunderous salvoes of the big guns the sharper note of quick-firers told that the destroyers were busy too. But Barrington was deaf to Maguire's entreaties. As senior officer the decision lay with him, and it was his duty to rejoin his flotilla as soon as possible.

"You'd better get back to your ship, old chap," he advised.

Barney returned crestfallen to his ship, and Mortimer looked imploringly at his chief. Barrington shook his head, and the two destroyers resumed their northward course. But the battle which they had declined was thrust upon them. Smoke appeared to the northward, and presently a covey of swift German destroyers came tearing down, eager to seize their easy chance. Hopelessly outnumbered, *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* fled southward, exchanging shots at long range with the leader of the German line. It would have gone hard with them had not a British light-cruiser squadron appeared in the nick of time. The Germans withdrew, not without damage, and *Hellion* and *Hippogriff*, summoned by a peremptory signal, closed with the flagship to undergo a "wigging." The squadron, which was returning from a daring reconnaissance to the eastward, had come five miles out of its way to rescue the errant destroyers, and as the flag-officer in command had reason to think he was in danger of being cut off by superior enemy forces, he was decidedly cross. He relieved his mind by semaphore, and ordered the destroyers to follow the squadron.

Southward and westward they ran at top speed, for there was no time to be lost. The whole German line lay between them and their friends, and the uproar of the firing grew and deepened every minute. Under cover of a friendly rain-squall they brushed through a screen of hostile destroyers and slipped round the tail of the German line. Then the light cruisers went off to report the result of their reconnaisance, with a parting injunction to *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* to attach themselves to the first destroyer-flotilla they met, and to refrain from further manœuvring alone.

"Good Lord, what a sight!" cried Barrington suddenly. They had driven clear of the rain and mist, and now they saw to the north-westward, glorious in the light of the setting sun, the main British battle-line, a chain of mighty grey ships, grim, stark, stripped for battle, that stretched away in a splendid perspective for mile on mile until it was lost in the distance. It was a noble and inspiring sight.

Abruptly they realised that the real battle had not yet begun, for the battleships were steaming rapidly southward, and their guns were silent. The clamour of guns which rolled down from the northward came from the battle-cruisers alone. They began to understand that while the German battleships were hurrying northward through the rain and mist in support of their hard-pressed battle-cruisers, the British battleships, in the clearer air to the westward, were manœuvring to get between the Germans and their base. They thrilled to the thought of what would happen when those silent guns began to speak.

*Hellion* and *Hippogriff* were just in time to cross the head of the battle-line—not without censorious signals from the flag-ship—then, turning northward, they picked their way among the destroyers and light cruisers which flanked the line.

"Look out for Jerry Armitage's flotilla!" shouted Barrington. "His boats are just about our speed."

Mortimer nodded, his eyes gleaming with excitement. At the rear of the long line they found the flotilla they sought, and addressed its Commodore by semaphore.

"Between Commanders. We're all alone and nobody loves us," signalled *Hellion*. "May we join you?"

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"Bless you, yes; come along!" said the flotilla-leader—or words to that effect. The Commodore was burning to know why two extraneous destroyers had dropped thus unexpectedly from the clouds, but this was no time for questions, and he was glad to have them, because his command lacked two of their number, which had been in dock for overhaul when the fateful summons came.

The two destroyers swung into line in rear of the flotilla, their crews tingling with delight.

"What absolutely gorgeous luck!" murmured Barrington ecstatically.

The thing was done; for the time they were part and parcel of the Fleet, and although retribution at the hands of their outraged Commodore might be in store for them, the greatest naval battle in history lay between, and the future could take care of itself. And then, as the sun went down, the weather cleared to the eastward, the ships of the German line appeared one by one from the mist, and with a heart-shaking roar of gunfire the main battle had begun.

The crews of the two destroyers saw little of the fight in its earlier stages, for their horizon was narrowed by the clouds of smoke which drifted from the battle-line. Twice they heard the roar of exploding magazines—an awesome sound which dominated even the thunder of the guns—but whether friend or foe had blown up they did not know. Blindly they obeyed the signals which came down the line from their flotilla-leader; the course was changed from southward to eastward—it was then, though they did not know it, that the enemy made his first fruitless effort to escape—and then, after an interval in which the firing grew to a hellish intensity and two more unseen ships were blown up, they turned southward again, following in each movement the course of the Fleet.

A gust of wind parted the smoke for a little, and they saw a portion of the British line, and beyond it, very far away, a long writhing smoke-cloud, stippled with masts and funnels, slashed by the tall bright fountains flung up by falling shells, and shot with the red flashes of the German guns. Already there were significant gaps in the long line.

"They've had enough!" gasped Mortimer, almost inarticulate with the thrill of the sight. "They're going to run—already!"

It was true; through the gaps in the line German destroyers were steaming, emitting vast clouds of smoke from their funnels as they came. They turned and steamed parallel to the line, and the smoke from their scores of funnels, driven diagonally towards the British line by the wind, formed an impenetrable curtain which screened battleships and destroyers alike. With one accord both fleets ceased firing, and the sudden silence was more startling than any noise.

"Increase speed to thirty knots. Alter course eight points to port," signalled the flotilla-leader.

"Our turn now!" said Barrington joyfully as they swung round in rear of the flotilla and dived into the smoke at full speed. He guessed that the flotilla was to pass with others through the line, and break up the enemy's destroyer-screen before the battleships could escape under cover of the smoke.

They caught a glimpse of the cliff-like bow of an advancing battleship as they darted through the line; then for ten minutes they drove eastward through smoke so dense that they could not see a quarter-of-a-mile ahead. The dim forms of destroyers loomed out of the smoke, and instantly the guns were barking.

To Barrington that hot five minutes' fighting in the grey half-light of evening was a blurred series of swift, cinematographic impressions—the sharp, smacking reports of the quick-firers and the scream of shells; Sexton at the bow-gun with his crew, firing with machine-like speed and perfect accuracy; the crash of a shell exploding on the fore-deck, and the whine and rattle of splinters among falling men; the keen tang of cordite in his nostrils; the deeper report of six-inch guns as British light cruisers flung themselves into the fight; the mangled hull of a wrecked destroyer drifting past, her decks littered with corpses. Then the enemy were in full retreat, leaving many of their number sunk or sinking, and the heavy guns of the battleships shook the air again as the smoke cleared away.

Well content, *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* returned to their places, the big shells booming and rumbling weirdly overhead. They had suffered some casualties, but, although they had been in the thick of the fighting, neither ship had been seriously damaged, and between them they had crippled a German destroyer, which had been subsequently sunk by a light cruiser.

Night fell, and the fighting continued in a blaze of searchlights, aided by a moon which showed fitfully between scurrying clouds. Twice they were called upon to repel submarine attacks — doubly daring because made in darkness — and there were many minor engagements with enemy destroyers, emboldened by the fall of night.

In the course of these activities the flotilla, which had numbered eight destroyers at the beginning, shrank to six, one destroyer being sunk by a heavy shell meant for her betters,

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and another disabled. Then a third of their little band, whose steering-gear had been damaged in the first attack, reported herself out of control and departed sinuously. Five of them were left to carry on, all more or less damaged, but full of fight. And near midnight the magic words came down the line that the flotilla, with others, was to attack the enemy's battleships.

"General orders to sink, burn, an' destroy," said Mortimer, as he stood with Barrington on *Hellion's* bridge as they rushed towards the enemy. "I wonder how many of us'll come out of this?"

Barrington said nothing; he was thinking of two old people in a quiet country vicarage, and wondering whether he would ever see them again. The devil-may-care *insouciance* of the first hours of the fighting was gone now, for the tremendous sights and sounds which had battered at their senses had had time to sink in; both men were grim, tight-lipped, alert, keyed to a desperate effort in what might be their last minutes of life. The last of the smoke shredded away; the revealing searchlights, pitiless and inevitable, settled on the rushing destroyers, and a storm of darting red flashes broke from the battleships' quick-firers. The air was filled with a hail of shells; it seemed impossible that anything could live in that hurricane of fire.

Nearer, nearer they rushed, and the firing grew fiercer and more accurate. A destroyer ahead sheered out of line, listing fearfully, all her bows a shattered ruin, smoke bursting from her blazing oil-tanks. *Hellion* and *Hippogriff* closed up and went on. Away to starboard, as far as they could see, other flotillas were hurrying to the attack. Barrington saw a destroyer in the nearest flotilla blow up and sink, but heard no sound of the explosion: then *Hellion's* aft funnel vanished overboard in the purple blaze of a bursting shell. A great pillar of flame shot up from the enemy's line, and a thunderclap of sound burst through the raging of the guns—a torpedoed battleship had blown up.

*Hellion's* crew cheered wildly, but not a voice could be heard in that howling inferno of noise. Now they were within range; Barrington swung the destroyer to bring his tubes to bear, then motioned with his hand. Two silvery shapes, beautiful as they were deadly, flashed from the tubes and disappeared, and instantly the men were labouring fiercely to hoist two more torpedoes into the tubes. A great shell hit the flotilla-leader amidships; she slowed, fell out of the line with steam boiling from her torn decks, and as they passed they saw the Commodore standing erect on her bridge-rail, waving them on to the attack. Another shell finished her as she fell astern, and the survivors closed up and went on.

*Hippogriff*, half crippled, was falling astern; the leading destroyer was on fire and listing heavily; *Hellion* alone, preserved by some strange freak of chance, was unharmed in any vital part. Now another big battleship was heeling over, wreathed in smoke and steam, but whose torpedo had struck her they could not tell.

The leading destroyer had sunk; *Hippogriff*, sorely hurt but still afloat, was limping away to starboard; and on the afterdeck the last of *Hellion's* torpedoes was being run into the tube. It was time to go. Barrington ran aft and pointed the tube himself at the wounded leviathan, now turning slowly out of the German line; the torpedo ran true to a hair and struck the battleship under her after-turret, and they saw the heavy turret-hood lifted and flung bodily overboard by the blast of the explosion that ended her. Their attack was over.

*Hellion* retreated under a heavy fire from the surviving battleships. *Hippogriff* had stopped a mile away, and shells were falling thickly around her. Barrington ran his ship alongside, and somehow a hawser was passed, though no man could remember afterwards how that desperate deed was done. Both ships were hit many times; *Hippogriff* was a floating ruin, and her consort had but one serviceable boiler when at length the hawser was fast and they could crawl painfully ahead. They must have been sunk there and then, but a fresh flotilla came driving down to the attack and drew the Germans' fire, and the indomitable *Hellion* slid slowly out of range, with *Hippogriff* towing astern.

In the grey of the dawn the two destroyers, sole survivors of their adopted flotilla, stopped for urgent repairs. A thin haze shut them in, and the Fleet was far away, but a dull rumbling from the south told that the embers of the fight still smouldered.

"My aunt!" said Mortimer in an awe-stricken voice, as Barrington bandaged a splinter-wound in his shoulder. "That was the real thing, an' no fatal error!"

"Come to report, Barry," said Maguire, climbing aboard out of *Hippogriff's* one remaining boat, a tattered Berthon newly patched with tarpaulin. Barney had suffered from a boiler which had exploded untidily; he was extensively bandaged, but his eyes were bright as ever and his voice had lost nothing of its rich flavour.

"Man, dear, an' wasn't it a jewel of a fight?" he began, waving a white-wrapped hand. "We're all shot to pieces above an' below, the engine-room's a scrap-heap, an' the Chief Artificer's sitting among the pieces,

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weeping an' picking stray turbine-blades out of his hair. We never had a chance before to find out how much a destroyer will really stand at a pinch!" Which, after all, was a highly philosophic way of putting it.

"Any chance of saving her, Barney?" asked Barrington, looking astern at the battered *Hippogriff*.

'Is it take her home you mane?" said Barney hotly, as if resenting an imputed slight. "Divil a chance! Man, do ye think I'd ha' brought her out of that fight with four torpedoes in hand if there'd been a kick left in her? She's perforated like a colander, an' she may float an hour—no more!"

"The devil!" exclaimed Barrington suddenly. The eastward haze had lifted, and they saw, about seven miles away, a big German battleship steaming slowly northward.

"*Our* number's up!" said Mortimer blankly. "That's the *Barbarossa*, their biggest an' best, and she's bound to spot us!"

It was a bad moment, for they were helpless and there was no aid in sight; but a closer inspection reassured them. The *Barbarossa* was not looking for a fight, for she had had quite enough for one day, and she ardently desired to be left alone. During the night H.M.S. *Mastodon* had had sight of her for three precious minutes at ten thousand yards, and had placed four fifteen-inch salvoes just where they would do the most good.

Dodging into a timely fog-bank, *Barbarossa* had next encountered H.M.S. *Truculent*, which was shooting very well just then. The *Barbarossa* was not, for *Mastodon's* delicate attentions had upset her fire-control. She received three crashing salvoes at short range, and then the fog had befriended her again, and she had escaped. But it was plain to any man's binoculars that she was feeling far from well, and she wanted to go home.

Some scores of British warships, all thirsting for her blood, lay between her and her accustomed harbour, so she was steaming northward at reduced speed—three of her boiler-rooms were an omelette of shell-fragments, pierced boiler-drums, and tangled tubes — in the hope of reaching the Skagerrak unmolested and getting home by a circuitous route.

"Gad, what a target!" said Barrington after a yearning silence. "Barney, did you say you had some torpedoes left?"

"Four of 'em," said Maguire. "Sure, I'd ha' spent 'em gladly, but one tube was jammed and t'other shot away. No have tubes, how can fire?"

"Got any oil left?"

"We might have thirty tons."

"How many of your crew are fit for duty?"

"Twenty or so—but man, dear, I told ye we're disabled."

"I know it," said Barrington. "But *we're* not, Barney—the old beauty's still got a move left in her. Smack it about—get your torpedoes aboard here as quick as you know how, an' we'll rig a hose an' pump in your oil. We shall want every drop. I'm going after that Hun, an' I mean to get him if I have to chase him to Kiel!"

"Phew!" whistled Mortimer, but Barney let out a wild Irish yell, in utter forgetfulness of the dignity of an officer. "It's a fire-eater ye are, Barry, boy!" he chuckled. "An' I'm with you to the end. Who said we'd had enough?"

They rigged a wire rope from the wreckage of *Hippogriff's* bridge to the stump of *Hellion's* mast, and the two ships were perilously close as they hauled the heavy torpedoes across in improvised slings. In the midst of these labours, *Rubicon*, of another flotilla, arrived from the south. Evidently she had passed an eventful night, for she possessed one funnel, no mast, and half a bridge, and her *tout ensemble* was that some careless person had picked her up and dropped her. Her Commander came aboard in a perforated whaler plugged with rags and cotton-waste, and was hoisted up *Hellion's* side by his boat's crew, tenderly nursing a wounded arm.

"Hullo, Whiffles! How's it going?" said Barrington, recognising a friend.

"All serene. Our battleships were mopping 'em up in handfuls when I left. It's a bally massacre for the Huns—no blooming 'runaway knock' about *this* little stunt. Did you get anything, Barry?"

"One of their *Landesvater* class—saw her sink, too!"

"Lucky dog! *We* fired everything we had, an' only bagged a measly light cruiser. But what's the evolution now, Barry? Are you collecting torpedoes in your old age?"

Barrington briefly outlined his plan. The newcomer looked at the comprehensive wreckage of *Hellion's* decks, then stared at Barrington as if doubting his sanity.

"But, man alive, you can't do it! Your boat's one continuous hurrah's-nest, for'ard, aft, and amidship. The *Barbarossa'll* blow you out of the water before you get within range. Haven't you done enough for one day?"

"Not while we've four torpedoes in hand an' there's a Hun within reach," said Barrington. "We've the bits of two destroyers here, an' with any luck we'll combine 'em

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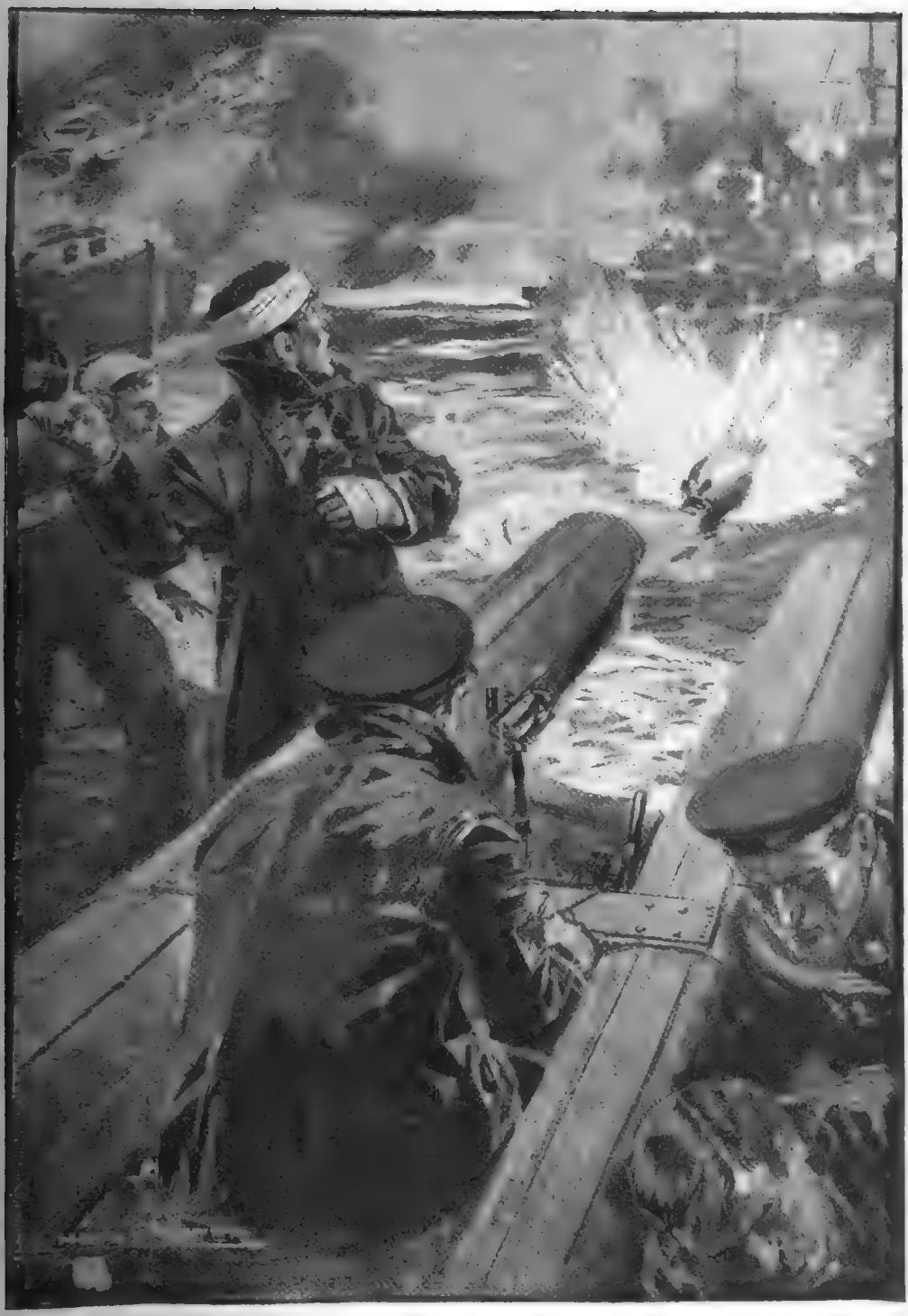

They closed to two thousand yards and fired their four torpedoes. Maguire laid one of the tubes, whooping like a fiend, and Barrington the other. [*Page 442, col. 2.*]

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into something useful. Can you spare us any oil, Whiffles?"

"Not a blessed drop. We've barely enough to reach the base. Chuck it up an' come along, man!"

"No," said Barrington. "But I'll be glad if you'll take our wounded."

"All right; if you *will* chuck yourselves away, they're best out of it. Gang your ain gait, old chap; if your corpses drift ashore in a month or two, I'll send a wreath."

With these cheering words, he departed to superintend the embarkation of the wounded. More than a hundred shell-torn, splinter-slashed, maimed, and scalded heroes were ferried across in the two available boats, and then *Rubicon* departed at her best speed of ten knots. For all his disapproval of their mad adventure, her Commander led a rousing cheer as his ship gathered way.

Of the three remaining officers, Barrington alone was unwounded, and he was too busy to give his amazing luck a thought. Had anyone asked him, he might have attributed his immunity to "Joss," that tutelary godling of the younger Navy which is supposed to take care of audacious adventures and hair-breadth escapes.

They had only fifty men of all ratings; every man was gun-deaf and weary to the bone, half of them were wounded, but all worked like Trojans, and before *Hippogriff* sank they had stripped her of everything useful. It only remained to open her sea-cocks and stand by until she sank. Then with high hopes they fired up their one workable boiler and went in chase of the *Barbarossa*.

Fate was kind to them, and they sighted her before noon. But to overtake her was another matter, for their one boiler was on the verge of dissolution, and shell-shaken steam-pipes and damaged auxiliaries made their engine-room a hell of leaking steam. All day they hung doggedly on *Barbarossa's* heels, while she fired at them intermittently with a single quick-firer, both her aft turrets being very completely out of action. She was badly damaged and almost disabled, but a battleship is never destroyed until she is sunk, and Barrington knew that, if she escaped him, a few months in the dockyard would make a new ship of her. He was fiercely determined never to let her go, and his pertinacity had its reward.

Near nightfall something gave way in her shaken engines; she slowed, and, with bull-dog tenacity, *Hellion* closed to the attack. There were no big battleships in line to cheer her on her way, there was no inspiring thirty-knot rush with sister ships ahead and astern; alone she attacked, cruelly mauled, half-crippled but indomitable, in the face of hundred-pound shells and the fire of the battleship's one effective heavy gun.

The evening mist was in her favour and the German gunners' nerves were in shreds, or *Hellion* could never have got within range; but, all things combining to that end, they closed to two thousand yards and fired their four torpedoes. Maguire laid one of the tubes, whooping like a fiend, and Barrington the other; three of the torpedoes went home, and the last they saw of the *Barbarossa* was her riven bottom as she rolled over and sank.

Those of the crew who could still stand worked *Hellion* home across four hundred miles of sea. This, like other miracles, defies explanation, but, as Barrington said when pressed for details: "You never know what may turn up when you go to sea in a destroyer. And as for getting home afterwards—well, that was all 'Joss,' absolute 'Joss,' if anything ever was."


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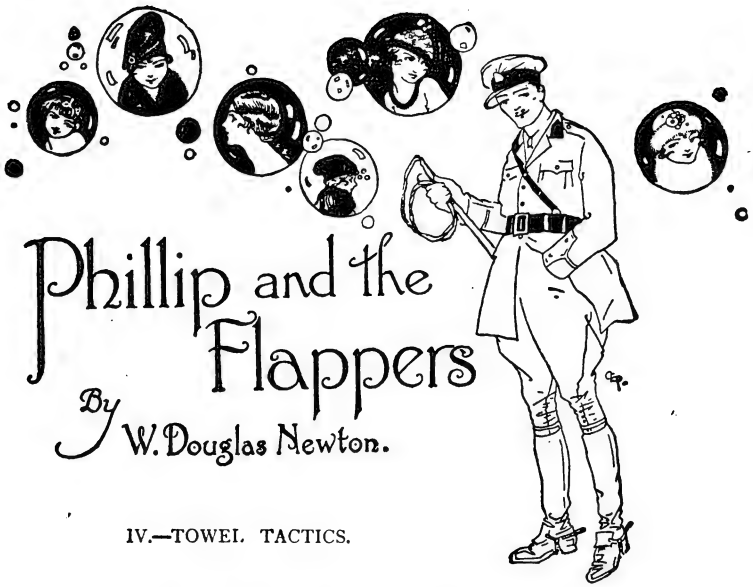

# Phillip and the Flappers

By W. Douglas Newton.

## IV.—TOWEL TACTICS.

**Phillip is a young and charming Staff Lieutenant, home wounded from the Front, and with a distinct leaning towards the society of flappers. The breakdown of his car when miles away from civilisation was really a blessing in disguise, since it was the means of his meeting a flapper of exceptional charm and pluck, who enlisting his aid against a common enemy, helped him to bring off a smart *coup* on his country's behalf.**

### I.

For the third time that morning the car put up its sparking plugs and said *Kamarad.*

Phillip sat back and drew a deep breath.

"No," he muttered, "no, little brother scrap-iron, I shall not lose my temper with you. I shall not be harsh, but you are a vile, putrid, unseemly, superannuated omnibus that has failed in life as a Tank. You Hindenburg—you!"

He examined the scenery with his quizzical eyes. There was quite a lot of scenery. There was, as a matter of fact, quite too much scenery. The only thing that could be said for it was that the sun was doing its best performance, but Phillip thought he would rather have a house or two thrown in and a little less sun. As it was, the scenery had the world all to itself. Big, blank hills, and a tree or two, and a bit of road, and a devil of a lot of sky—but, a ghastly excess of scenery. No sign of a spot where man could get material aid for his car or liquid field-dressing for himself.

"Over that poisonous hill," reflected Phillip, "there is probably a very large chunk of sea—I hate sea. And if I lift this car on my back and walk seven miles I shall probably reach the idiotic town of Benby."

Meanwhile, high up on the hill that was coyly hiding the sea, he thought, for a moment, he saw a movement, something that passed like a slip of light against the trees. It might have been a woman's dress: he had a moment's joyous hope—he looked hard. Now it was gone. A *blasé* seagull doing a joy-ride away from the boring waters, no doubt. He turned back to the car. "I wonder what on earth ails thee, juggernaut?" he said. "And what do I do to you? Do I hit you at random, or do I unscrew things—and, damee, will you spit oil at me in the process?"

Phillip regarded his glowing and perfect mackintosh. It was quite new, the last word of its kind. With a sigh he began to do wild movements with the mysterious innards of his car.

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Then the little boy arrived. At least that was what Phillip felt. When one is mending a motor-car one always does know when the little boy arrives. One feels him, without looking round, somewhere under the shoulder blades. One knows he is there by the desire for child-slaughter that suddenly grows in the heart. The country was inhumanly bare, but this little boy had arrived. Phillip was sure of it. If a motor broke down in the midst of the uninhabited Sahara the little boy would turn up all the same. Phillip felt him in his back; then he hit his best thumb with his largest spanner—that always happens, too.

Phillip said the things it is fit and improper to say at such moments, and the little boy laughed—a laugh like a bell.

Phillip swung round. The little boy had a gold pig-tail and, oh, yes, the neatest exhibition of silken ankles.

II.

She was quite the crispest and vividest of her guild, this flapper; rather tall, but so finished and so graceful, and built strongly and sweetly like a vigorous boy. A small bright face, with an impudent yet jolly light in her hazel eyes, and an air of crisp and sprightly assurance about her. Not a forward minx, but a girl who could use her wits and was certain of herself. Oh, and such a darling, too! Phillip said:

"Did you catch my full swear? If so, I apologise——"

**She was quite the crispest and vividest of her guild, this flapper; rather tall, but so finished and so graceful.**

The girl stopped laughing and became serious, and at the same time hugely glad.

"Oh, a soldier," she cried, noting his tunic under the mac.

"That's very nice of you," said Phillip. "There are other people who would call me just a 'Brass Hat.'"

"Does that make a difference?" asked the girl. She looked at Phillip's perfection of kit. It seemed to dawn on her that perhaps he was too beautiful. She frowned a little.

"It's supposed to make a difference," said Phillip, ready to make a long and amiable speech. "A 'Brass Hat,' so some people think, is a thing they have about Headquarters to help people realise war isn't always ugly. A 'Brass Hat' would melt in the rain, of course, but as a decoration——"

The flapper frowned.

"I'm afraid——" she half mused. "No, I can't help myself, there's nobody else."

"At a pinch," said Phillip, "staff lieutenants have been known to betray intelligence."

The girl flashed a smile at him.

"I don't think you are as idiotic as you look. Come on, we must be quick."

Phillip came on, and it was certainly quick. The flapper went up-hill at a swinging run until they reached the cliffs. She moved like a deer. Her silken legs flashed with a rhythmic swiftness beneath and amid the soft folds of her thin skirt. Phillip, with his shrapnel-loaded leg, found it difficult to keep pace with her.

III.

The flapper threw herself down before she came to the cliff edge and crawled forward until she could peer down on the beach. Phillip imitated her Boy Scout tactics.

"There's the brute," she whispered to him. "And he's still at it."

Phillip looked down on to the beach. The vast expanse of sand was occupied by a single figure—and his clothes. He was drying himself.

"You mean the lonely little merman down there? I have him ranged—well?"

"Watch him," panted the flapper. Her breath was beating up and down at the base of her throat, but it was from excitement rather than from their sprint. Phillip watched the lonely bather who was drying himself. He watched him keenly. Then:

"My hat!" he breathed. He slipped a field note-book from his tunic pocket, and a pencil. He handed these to the girl. "Take down as I call out," he said.

He glared at the lonely bather. The lonely bather was only drying himself, apparently. But the movements of his towel were queer

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**The flapper went uphill at a swinging run until they reached the cliffs. . . Her silken legs flashed with a rhythmic swiftness beneath and amid the soft folds of her thin skirt.**

and jerky. At moments they seemed strangely foreign to the homely processes of rubbing down. Phillip watched them. Then he called out: "L—J—C—X—X——" He went on calling a long string of letters (which do not matter here), for the lonely bather was towelling himself to code. There was no mistake about that. Phillip, though he could not read it since it was in cypher, knew too much about semaphore signalling to be misled here. The fellow was signalling out to sea.

Phillip looked out to sea.

There was a very weary-looking fishing boat out there. She was a smallish craft and inconspicuous. She was obviously fishing in a melancholy and hopeless fashion. But——

"It's always the same boat," whispered the flapper close to his ear. "The old red sail with the greenish patch at the bottom. It's always fishing there when—when he is drying himself. What is he signalling? The letters don't make sense."

"I can't make sense out of it myself. But then it's in cypher. We must pass it along to the highbrows at the War Office."

"Look!" cried the girl.

There was a flutter of white on the smack. It might have been a man shaking a dishcloth at the galley-door. But Phillip knew what it was.

"Conversation ended," he said. He was about to look at the man on the beach, but he fixed his eye on the smack.

"Yes," said the flapper. "The towelry business is over. He's beginning to dress."

"Leave him to it," said Phillip. "Regard the fishing Dreadnought, please. Anything queer about that jolly old boat to you?"

The flapper regarded.

"No-o. She moves quickly, and has a wake, of course. But that means auxiliary power, you know. They've got a motor on board. Many fishing boats have."

"Quite so," agreed Phillip. "I rose to that. But about that cheery little wake, now? Do you observe that it really doesn't start—that is, it is not at its churningest until fifty or more feet behind the stern of the smack?"

"I know, and that means——?"

"Well, that there must be a long hull, longer than the smack we can see, underneath the water."

The flapper's eyes opened wide. She looked as if this was her moment to scream.

"Heavens!" she cried. "Heavens!—a long hull under water. It's—it's a submarine."

"I suspect it's not a tame whale following for scraps or Jonahs," admitted Phillip. "They've tried the innocent fishing-boat superstructure trick before."

The flapper gasped.

"I knew he was a spy; I felt it, right in me. But that that dirty, mouldy little boat was a disguised submarine, a vile, Jack-the-ripper submarine——!"

"Oh, the Hun has

**Phillip watched the lonely bather who was drying himself. He watched him keenly. Then: "My hat!" he breathed.**



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the habit of disguising himself in dirt. So you knew he was a spy?" Phillip glanced at the beach. "Our towel expert will be some time donning civilisation. While we wait, unfold the whole story to brother—oh, you'd better have my name, it's Phillip. I like it with two 'l's' and just the shade of a drawl in it, please."

"Mine's Palmer—well, Thecla, really. Well, I knew he was a spy because—because it's against human nature for a man who lives with the sea at his door to walk five miles on a hot day to bathe."

"Perhaps he likes the colour of the water here," said Phillip. "Still, of course, these towel tactics, plus the submarine, fit into your suspicion. Well, how did you track down the little lad?"

"Well, our house—it is about two miles away—is on his road. I noticed that he passed pretty regularly. Then one day when I was exploring I saw him down there doing his towel dance, and the fishing boat was out at sea. Three times I saw him there towel-wagging, and there was always that beast of a boat. I began to connect up. You see, really, the man's house is within an easy stroll of the beach at Claxty, and the bathing there is quite rippin'. So his coming all the way to this lonely spot, and his curious antics with that towel, and that boat—which is a submarine—well, it made me think him fishy."

"And in ordinary life, during the moments when he isn't bathing, is he fishy then? I mean, do you know who he is? Is he the sort of cad one would suspect?"

"Not in the least little bit. He's a retired stockbroker with an ordinary and perfectly attractive house. He says he's English, and he seems English. Also, his name is Smith."

"Of course, his name would be Smith. The Germans are so original. And the rest is nothing to go by. Nobody could be more English or stockbreaking than your real spy. Why didn't you call out the Army the first time you saw him towel-wagging, Miss Thecla?"

Thecla lifted a delicious chin, a proud and reserved little gesture.

"A local Boy Scout arrested a perfectly innocent but incredibly peppery General six weeks ago. The General was in mufti, and he *would* ask childish questions about the village G.R.'s. The results of that arrest were appalling."

"Knowing Generals as I do I can well understand it," said Phillip. "But I see the point. We really shouldn't drop a piece of cliff on little brother bather until we are certain. I wish I could decode that message. I should dearly love to know what his game is."

The gay, acute young lieutenant looked at the girl quickly. "Do you remember the exact days when yon laddie of the flapping towel came and bathed and signalled?" he asked rather eagerly. An idea had come to him.

"Of course I do," said Thecla practically. "He signalled last Tuesday. Then on the Friday before that. Then——"

"Phew!" whistled Phillip. "I thought so. I've got him. I know him. The whole thing fits in. So this, then, is the gentleman who plays the deuce with my beautiful official correspondence."

"That sounds rather idiotic," observed Thecla. "But I suppose it means something."

Phillip's cheery young eyes became suddenly cold and grim.

"It does. It means something of an unspeakably beastly sort, Miss Thecla. In town I do things daily in Whitehall—don't matter what sort of things, only they are connected with the mails, outgoing and incoming. Now, nobody knows when mail-ships leave or enter. It's kept secret purposely. All the same, last Wednesday an incoming mail—she was the *Seville*—was sunk—torpedoed in the usual loathsome way, you know. Also on the Saturday before a mailship, the *Dodo*, sailing outward, was sunk——"

Thecla went white, and her hazel eyes glowed.

"I see what you mean. That cad down there probably had the secret of the sailings sent to him, and signalled them out to the 'U' boat. I see."

"Yes. Also, there is a mail, the *Philantic*, sailing for the South—*to-morrow*."

Thecla, the alert, was on her feet once more.

"O—oh," she cried. "O-oh, it's ghastly. That's what he's just been signalling. But we can save that ship at least. We've *got* to save it."

"I think the first thing we've got to do," said Phillip, rising and smiling, "is to get little brother bather. Look at him! He's washed, and in his right mind and full kit. He's going to stroll home without one black care on his mild and murderous mind. How does he get up from the beach? I think I want to be severe with him."

## IV.

As spies go the bather was quite among the first of his craft. He was a big, fattish man of middle-age, slow-going, and serene. When he encountered Phillip he was unperturbed at the sight of a uniform, even so

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resplendent a uniform. He met Phillip, and only Phillip. Thecla, much against her sporting instinct, had taken cover amid some bushes. In case the interview was lethal, somebody had to take the news along to the authorities. Thecla was willing to do all the fighting, only Phillip considered she should be drafted into the reserve.

The lonely bather came up the cutting from the beach, past the flapper's hiding-place, right into Phillip's. Phillip expected the creature to jump, show nerves. He merely beamed and nodded. He knew his business. Phillip recognised he must be careful. Phillip said he would like a match.

The young lieutenant filled his pipe, and took the matchbox. The lonely bather talked about the weather. Phillip lit his pipe, puffed calmly, walked close up to the other, looking into his eyes. He said he thought the weather was quite good weather, and the sea was smooth.

"We'll hike this lad along to my car, bundle him in and strap him down, then off to the town with him." [*Page 448, col. 2.*]

"As smooth as a pond," said the bather. "I've just had a delightful swim. A beautiful sea."

Phillip took the pipe out of his mouth.

"All the same," he said calmly, closely watching his enemy—"all the same, though the sea is good for swimming and sailing, you were wrong about the *Philantic*."

Oh, well, the blighter couldn't help starting a little then, though it was rather a stiffening of all the muscles than a jerk of fear.

"Indeed?" he said, and Phillip had to admire his calm. "But what is this about the *Philantic?* I didn't mention the *Philantic*."

"Not to me, perhaps," replied Phillip sweetly.

He saw the calm but acute gaze of the spy travelling over him. He saw the dawn of a smile on the spy's lips. The spy was saying, even as others had said to themselves, that this young puppy was really too much of a dandy and a fop to be seriously feared. He beamed amiably again.

"This must be a military joke," he said. "Perhaps it has a catch in it. The *Philantic*, what is the *Philantic*—a ship, I take it? How does it come in?"

"It goes out," corrected Phillip, ever so much more sweetly. "Only it goes out the day after to-morrow instead of to-morrow"

The spy took a deep breath. *That* had touched him.

"You were misinformed for once," said Phillip, bluffing amiably. "Your *schweinkopfen* have not been so careful as they were over the details of the *Seville* and the *Dodo*."

"Ah!" breathed the bather. He tried to step back. His free hand dropped to his pocket.

"Please don't," urged Phillip. "I happen to have got my right hand into my pocket first. I can shoot quite well from it."

The man's hand came away from his pocket with nervous haste. He lifted it quickly in an unmistakable gesture.

"How the *Kamarad* instinct *does* come out in your race!" said Phillip. "You are cleverish, but——"

"You do not yourself seem to be so foolish as you look," remarked the bather.

"Englishmen never are," said Phillip. "That's what makes life so complicated for Germans."

"Might I ask how?" began the other, and really his calm was worthy of better ends.

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"I didn't like your system of drying," said Phillip. "In the presence of a disguised submarine"—the German winced—"your towel tactics were too mechanical and readable."

"So," says the German, "it was the towel." He lifted the towel as though to scowl on it for giving him away. "The towel, it is a simple enough thing, but it can be dangerous." With a quick jerk he flung the towel so that its folds enveloped Phillip's head and shoulders and arms.

Phillip swore because he had been tricked; he struggled wildly with the damp and clinging mass. The bather jumped back and laughed aloud.

"You English, oh yes, you complicate simple German lives by your cleverness. But sometimes you are not really as clever as you think."

Phillip burst through swathes of towel, made to rush at the brute, found himself gazing into the most annoying little barrel of an automatic pistol.

The big bather sneered at him.

"I would like to train you in the *Kamarad* instinct, but I fear I have not the time or opportunity. You are best dead, my friend, and quickly."

He was not a fool; he did not hesitate to fire, but, quick as he was, someone else was quicker. There was a bewildering flash of light skirts, silk ankles, and whirling bodies, and, after a breathless moment of fluttering chaos, Phillip uttered a loud yell of joy.

"My hat!" he yelled. "My hat! That was marvellous. Oh, really splendid. How, in heaven's name, did you do it?"

Thecla, blushing with a splendour of rosiness, a little dishevelled, but bright of eye and laughing, was, indeed, in a position to make one marvel. She was sitting on the large bather. Her slim weight was beautifully applied to keep him under; her small, fine hands were holding him tight, and the slim silk of her legs were twisted in a becoming but highly lethal way about the enemy somewhere in the region of the throat and chest.

She laughed up at Phillip, blushing as she laughed. She opened her mouth to speak, and the German with a rich string of oaths, began to struggle.

He struggled through a wriggle and a half. Then he swore again; then he gave a very gurgly and agonised scream.

At the end of the scream he called "Mercy! Mercy!"

The flapper bent her head to him.

"If you try any more tricks like that I warn you it will be painful as well as fatal. You'll hurt yourself and won't disturb me. Struggle a little and your arm snaps like a carrot. Struggle a little more and my—er—leg throttles you. Strike the ground three times with your left hand if you decide to come quietly."

The spy struck the ground three times.

Thecla looked up at Phillip, and laughed her bright, jolly, blushing laugh.

"My dear, you're an absolute darling," cried Phillip. "It's magnificent."

"Quite easy, really," said Thecla with blushes and with pleasure. "I'm really rather a dab at ju-jitsu. All the same, I don't want to sit on the Hun for ever."

Phillip found the bather's pistol. He also cut the bather's towel into long, stout strips, and bound the bather with it. Then:

"Good! We'll hike this lad along to my car, bundle him in and strap him down, then off to the town with him. We'll jail him and warn the *Philantic* at the same time. Most useful that car—oh, but hang it all, it's broken down."

"That's all right," said Thecla, smoothing herself out. "That's all right. I'll mend it. I'm rather a dab at car repairs, too."

"You're an angel all the time, in good deeds and—and——"

"Yes?" asked Thecla shyly.

"And in good looks," ended Phillip.

*(Next month Phillip shows himself once more a master of strategy, and gives ample evidence of the fact that under his flippant exterior he possesses considerable astuteness.)*

*PLEASE ORDER YOUR "ROYAL!"*

*If you will all do this we shall know exactly how many copies to print, and the result will be a great saving of paper. Moreover, there is the soldier—or is it a sailor?—to whom you pass on your copy, to consider. You can't disappoint him. The ROYAL will help to keep up his spirits, and "Tommy" fights his best when he is in good spirits. So please order your ROYAL and make sure of it.*

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# For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

**All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Fordes. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.**

## MORE FRIGHTFULNESS.

LITTLE SISTER: "Have you brought me any souvenirs?"

WOUNDED "TOMMY": "Only this little bullet that the doctor took out of my side."

LITTLE SISTER: "I wish it had been a German helmet."

## THE L'MIT.

Charles, a sweet-voiced cockney chap, was chosen to sing at a camp concert and obliged with "Kathleen Mavourneen." His enunciation of the line: "The 'orn of the 'unter is 'eard on the 'ill," jarred very much on the nerves of one man, who mentioned that Charles really ought to put a few "aitches" in now and then.

"Garn," said Charles, eyeing him with pity, "don t show yer ignorance. Don't yer know there ain't no 'H' in music? It only goes up to 'G'!"

## SEEKING MOTHER'S ADVICE.

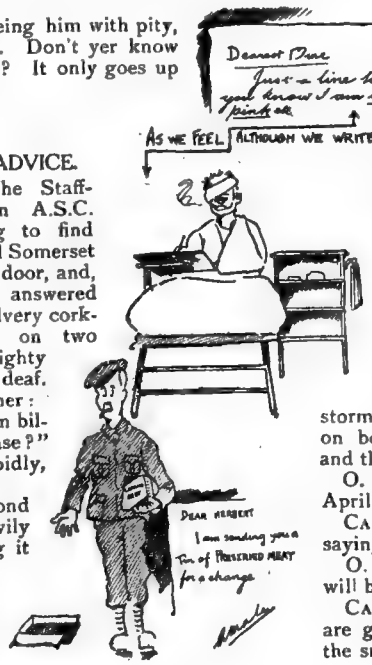
One day last autumn, the Staff-Sergeant in charge of an A.S.C. working squad, was trying to find billets for his men in a small Somerset village. He knocked at a door, and, after a long pause, it was answered by an old, old lady, with silvery corkscrew curls, and leaning on two sticks. She looked about eighty and was apparently very deaf. The Staff-Sergeant said to her:

"Could you have two men billeted here for a few days, please?"

She looked at him stupidly, and said, "Eh?"

He roared it at her a second time, and after leaning heavily on her sticks, and thinking it over, she said dubiously:

"I don't know, I'm sure——" then suddenly brightening up—"but I'll go and ask mother."


Dearest Dear
Just a line to let you know I am in the pink as
AS WE FEEL ALTHOUGH WE WRITE
DEAR HERBERT
I am sending you a Tin of PRESERVED MEAT for a change

## IN AND OUT THE WINDOW.

A Frenchman in London boarded a tram, and just as it started the conductor gave a shout of "Look out!" Whereupon the Frenchman thrust his head out of the window and came into violent contact with a post. Turning to the conductor, he remarked:

"When you English say 'Look out' you evidently mean 'Look in!'"

## ANSWERING THE ADJUTANT.

SCENE: Outside main gate of Discharge Depot.
Time: 2.20 p.m.

A certain General was expected to visit the depot at 2.30 p.m. The Adjutant told the sentry that when the car arrived and the General alighted, he (the sentry) was to turn to his front, stand at attention and salute smartly. The sentry (who was awaiting his discharge) was also informed that the General might ask him some questions as to his duties.

"For instance, if he said to you: 'What are you here for?' what would you reply?" asked the Adjutant.

"Rheumatism and chronic bronchitis, sir," replied the sentry.

## SEEING THE SNOWDROP.

After an unusually hard snowstorm the following conversation was heard on board a T. B. D., between the Captain and the Officer of the Watch.

O. O. W.: "This is vile weather for April, sir."

CAPTAIN: "Yes, but you know the old saying—'April showers bring May flowers.'"

O. O. W.: "Yes, but precious few flowers will be produced by this weather."

CAPTAIN: "Well, I don't know what you are grumbling about, haven't you just seen the snowdrop?"

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# PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

*The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.*

*Photo* *A. W. Cutler.*

This is a flower which is sold for about sixpence at Tehnantepre, in Mexico. It grows on a species of palm-tree and is neatly wrapped in one of its own leaves.

### "FLOWERS, LADY?"

It is difficult to believe that this curious, cigar-shaped object is in reality a flower, but such is the case, and it grows on a species of palm-tree, which is to be seen at Tehnantepre, in Mexico.

Tehnantepre is only sixty-seven miles from the South American border, and is situated in the heart of the Mexican tropics, a most unhealthy spot. It is noted for the Indians who live there. The men in this particular place are wont to pose as the lords of creation, and work is more or less looked upon as the woman's part. The sale of flowers and fruit is their chief means of livelihood, and this curious flower is always sold in this manner, the flower being ingeniously wrapped up in a leaf of the tree, and costing about the equivalent of an English sixpence.

### A DOGGY HERO.

A crippled survivor of the battle of the Aisne arrived in America not long ago. This wounded hero is not, as might be imagined, a soldier, but a dog, and, moreover, a dog who wears an artificial limb.

The animal was used by the French Army, and was wounded by shrapnel while busily engaged in carrying a dispatch to the first line trench during the opening hours of the great onslaught.

In spite of the fact that his left foreleg had been torn away, the plucky little creature struggled bravely ahead, and did not give in until he had successfully carried out his orders.

Strangely enough, the dog's master was also wounded at about the same time. Subsequently, however, he recovered possession of the dog, and had the wounded hero fitted up with an artificial leg, which was specially made for him in Paris.

A silver cap was used to encase and protect the stump, and this, in turn, was fitted into the aluminium-lined socket in the top of the peg leg. A strap attached to the limb and fastened about the animal's body keeps the wooden member in place.

*Photo* *By courtesy of Popular Mechanics.*

This dog lost a leg while carrying dispatches for the French Army. His master subsequently had an artificial limb made for him in Paris.

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## FOR HARASSING HUNS.

THESE are two sturdy specimens of what America is bringing into use in the war. Any Hun who happens to get in the way of a shell of such formidable appearance as this product of Uncle Sam's, surely stands a veritable ghost of a chance of coming up smiling!

*Photo* *Newspaper Illus. Ltd.*
One of the U.S.A. 16-inch shells that will be brought into use by our American allies.

*Photo* *E. C. Hall.*
This miniature animal hails from India, and is a "dhobi" donkey, whose business it is to carry clothes to the river to be washed.

## A "DHOBI" DONKEY.

IN the Punjab and North-West Provinces of India donkeys are largely used for carrying small loads. This quaint little creature is a "dhobi" donkey; that is to say, his walk in life is carrying clothes to the river to be washed.

## AN ANCIENT INN.

THIS picturesque old building is the "Fighting Cocks Inn," at St. Albans, and claims to be the oldest inhabited house in England. The inn was originally a monk's boathouse, and is over eight hundred years old.

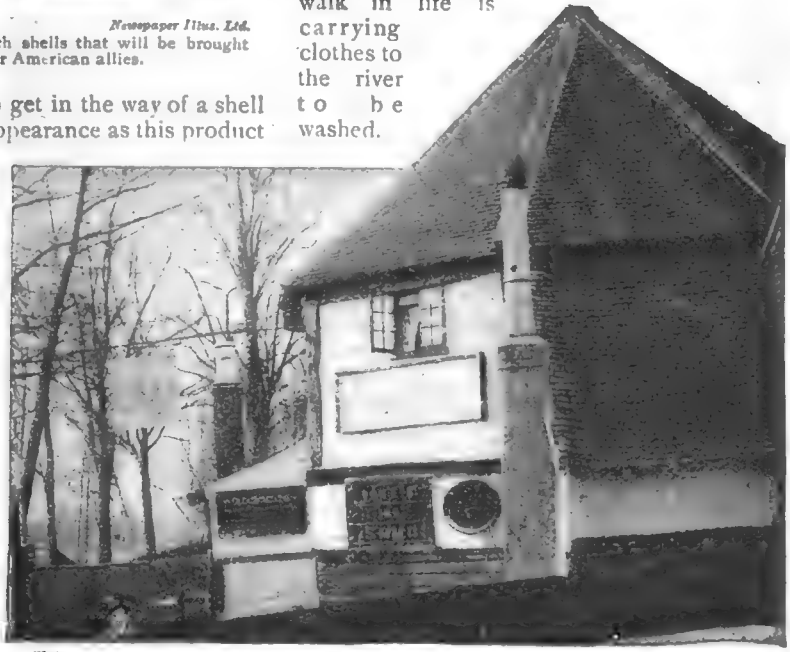

*Photo* *W. J. Brunell.*
"The Fighting Cocks" Inn at St. Albans claims to be the oldest inhabited house in England, and was originally a monk's boathouse.

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# A LAW UNTO HERSELF

By Dorothy Rose.

*"O my princess! true, she errs,*
*But in her own grand way."*

I.

"That's too much for you. Let me come and help you."

The brown-faced man who had been watching over the low stone wall Marigold's struggle with a reluctant rhubarb plant, pushed open the wooden gate and went to her assistance. Marigold shot him a resentful look, tilted her proud little head, and returned to the fray. The next moment she was sitting on the ground with a handful of rhubarb leaves in her hand, and Lieutenant Robin Carmoyle standing with a praiseworthy solemnity beside her.

A flicker of amusement, hastily suppressed, showed in his grey eyes as he lifted her to her feet.

"Thank you!" The hostility faded from Marigold's face as her glance fell on the gold stripe that adorned his left sleeve. "I do hope you didn't hurt yourself hauling me up?"

"Not a bit." Robin, having dealt with the plant, was wondering how in the world this slip of a girl with the satiny black hair and violet eyes brimful of mischief came to be associating with rhubarb in a remote Surrey village. Seeking enlightenment, he accepted an invitation to rest on the green bench beneath the lilac tree.

Marigold sat down beside him, stretching out shapely feet encased in ridiculous silk stockings and high-heeled shoes.

"I managed all the others, but that was a perfect brute among rhubarb plants," she said. "I believe its roots go right through to Sydney, New South Wales. It *was* sporting of you to come to the rescue, and you a wounded hero, too. If it isn't rude to ask, please tell me all about it. Was it shrapnel or a bullet? I'm an abominably curious person."

"Shrapnel," replied Lieutenant Carmoyle promptly, and launched into a restrained account of the engagement on the Somme which had given him the right to wear a gold stripe and spend the summer in Blighty. "The doctor says I shall walk as well as ever in a couple of months or so, and meanwhile England in July's very delightful, though a bit lonely at times. You see, I haven't any near relatives—that's why I intend to come down here frequently. I'm staying at The Bungalow—belongs to my greatest friend, and he's given me the run of it. I'm rather great on gardening—my father had a big farm in Yorkshire, and I used to help him until I went abroad prospecting. If I may say so, you seem to know very little about it."

"Nor would you if you'd been boxed up in a Chelsea flat for years," she retorted, with a quick glance at this muscular, square-jawed man whose speech was as direct as the look in his deep-set, grey eyes. "I've dabbled in art, danced and chirped in revue, shared in Bohemian revels, but never until six weeks ago been on visiting terms with cauliflowers and peas."

"What inspired you to become a tiller of the soil?" asked Robin curiously. She looked such an absurd wisp of a thing with her slim, white throat and rebellious mouth, that could yet smile so enchantingly.

"It was like this." Marigold propped her little pointed chin in her palm and looked reflectively at a row of pastel-shaded sweet peas. "I was tired of selling flags and programmes, and kicking up my heels at charity shows; it all seemed so futile and un-worthwhile. Everyone else was making sacrifices, and I wasn't. The war got into my bones, and I felt I simply couldn't go on butterflying—even for charity. A friend of mine, Lucy Medway, wanted to take this cottage and work the garden for the benefit of the hospital here at Little Brooking. She had gardening experience, but couldn't afford the rent. I *could*—I have £100 a year of my own—so I took it and came down to help her. We were doing famously, and then three weeks ago Lucy—poor dear!—

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was fetched home to nurse her father, who had a paralytic stroke. So here I am, stranded, with only an occasional boy and a young library of gardening books to help me, pledged to bring up Lucy's nurslings to the best of my ability."

Robin held out a sinewy, brown hand. "I'm with you," he said. "I like pluck, and, by Jove! you've got it! You can count on me, limp and all—it won't prevent my working. I've got tired of fishing and idling in The Bungalow's three-foot garden. We'll start now. Those peas, for instance—they want higher sticks, and you ought to be sowing cabbages and turnips and carrots, unless the hospital is to have empty vegetable-dishes in the autumn. Then the carnations in the front garden want pegging down. Take me round, and we'll make out a plan of campaign."

Marigold obeyed eagerly. After the exotic charm and artificial chatter of studio and stage companions, there was something refreshing about Robin Carmoyle. His businesslike directness and the entire absence of the flattering deference to which she had been accustomed piqued Marigold while it also attracted her. At present his attitude was entirely impersonal; his interest in the peas and potatoes was really genuine, and not prompted by interest in her.

As Marigold went in to the early dinner prepared by Mrs. Horner, the cheerful old body who bore her company at The End Cottage, a confident little smile hovered on her soft lips, the smile of one who, assured of victory, throws out a challenge to Fate.

Ten o'clock next morning saw Lieutenant Carmoyle once more in the front garden, where carnations and roses, blue delphinium, and shell-pink poppies made a fitting background for Marigold, ridiculously decorative in a frock of pale grey *crêpe* and a fuchsia-red silk sports coat.

Robin gazed at her inscrutably for several seconds. Then: "You don't really contemplate gardening in that Bond Street rig-out, do you?" he inquired. "Go and put on something appropriate—a serge skirt and sweater, and, above all, sensible shoes"—with an annihilating glance at her grey suède slippers.

For a moment Marigold stood speechless, astonished beyond measure that this man—any man—should dare to order her about in such a fashion. Then her head tilted defiantly, and the sleeping flame woke to life in her eyes as she said:

"If I choose to garden in cool clothes instead of the stifling garments you suggest, who is to prevent me?"

"No one," returned the man, quite unperturbed. "Just as you like! You won't annoy me, because I shan't be here. I came to work—you can't work in that musical comedy rig-out, and I don't propose to labour alone."

Marigold gasped with mingled resentment and amazement. Then her glance wandered to the kitchen garden; she remembered the multifarious things to be done—the seeds waiting to be sown, the late celery and cabbages to be planted out, the fruit to be picked. With an effort she stifled her anger, and marched into the house without a word.

In ten minutes she was back, clad in a short tweed skirt, tan stockings belonging to the absent Lucy, and stout little brogues. In place of the suggested sweater she wore a white silk shirt and an old green sports coat, also the property of her friend.

Robin surveyed her with open approval. "Capital!" he said. "You'll be twice as comfortable. Let's get to work."

They got to work, with the result that by dinner-time the garden began to assume such an aspect of neatness and well-being as had not pervaded it since the departure of Lucy. At one o'clock Mrs. Horner, who was a lady of discretion, laid dinner for two on the rustic table outside the sitting-room window, and they sat down to rest and stay their appetites on lamb, salad, and home-grown raspberries.

"You've worked like a Trojan," said Robin, as Marigold sank into her chair with a sigh of relief. "I can hardly believe you've really been brought up on futurist art and *Pêches Melba*. I perceive, though, that you have the restless spirit—you wanted to chuck weeding the onion-bed before it was half finished."

"I'm not a perseveri g person," admitted Marigold amiably. "That's why I've never done any real good at a career. I can sketch passably—fashions are my strong point—I could sing well, only I never practise. Dancing's the only thing that has got a hold on me; I love it, but even there I have my limitations. Still, it's a great life! You can't think what glorious 'rags' we used to have in the studio, and the suppers after the theatre. Sometimes I'd give anything to be back again, to ride in a taxi and feast on lobster salad and ice cream to the sound of a restaurant band."

"This is worth all the restaurant meals in London," declared Lieutenant Carmoyle firmly. "As for all that tinsel and glitter—that's not life. I'd as soon spend my days on a merry-go-round. You don't know what life is!" He turned to her almost fiercely. "You *can't* know till you've lived among woods and lakes, have seen the sun

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set behind the rim of the desert, and heard the surf thunder on the coral reefs. Life isn't paving stones and powder-puffs; it's mountain ranges and moonlight."

"I didn't know you were such a confirmed wanderer," said Marigold, with a challenging smile. "I suppose your idea of happiness is to lie on your back in the desert? I prefer cushions and a comfortable fireside."

"But you are happy here? You love the country?" asked Robin, with a return to his usual quiet manner.

"I bear with it." Marigold would not admit what a hold the peaceful village life had taken of her. Besides, Robin's championship of an outdoor existence was quite enough to make her uphold the artificial delights of town. So they sparred amicably until the bell in the creeper-covered church struck two, and sent them back full of renewed energy to their work.

In the days that followed the garden flourished abundantly. Every morning the tall, broad-shouldered figure limped down the hill to The End Cottage to aid and direct operations among the peas and beans. It was amazingly hot even for July, but Marigold stuck to her work, conquering the selfish spirit which prompted her to loaf in a hammock or seek the cool seclusion of the woods.

Standing there with her dark head flung back half-defiantly, her red lips parted, her pale cheeks tinted to a delicate rose, she seemed . . . a creature from another world.

Her perseverance had something to do with her companion—Robin's quiet enthusiasm for work was apt to be infectious—for though he was a hard taskmaster he never expected of her more than she could perform, and his praise when she worked well was as unsparing as his condemnation when she was tempted to slack. Hitherto Marigold had always been a law unto herself; it was a novel and piquant sensation to come in contact with a man whom her vagaries did not touch, and who was quite unmoved by her occasional waywardness.

July was over, and August had cast a golden veil over the land ere their friendly squabbles changed

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to an actual quarrel. Their afternoon's work had been interrupted by a deluge of rain, which forced them at last to take shelter in the one sitting-room, a restful little place, all fumed oak and blue and white china. Thither Mrs. Horner brought them tea, which Marigold, having changed into a dainty skirt and old rose jumper, poured out with a pretty little air of importance. To Robin she had never seemed so attractive; instinctively he saw her queening it over a home of her own, and in his heart rose the longing to give her that home, to stand between her and the world through which she flitted so recklessly.

Seeing his abstraction, Marigold rallied him gaily as she passed him the cake. "What a sobersides!" she exclaimed. "I want to hear all about the concert at Ridgeway. I'm going to dance, you know, and as it's twelve miles away heaven only knows how I shall get there."

"I'll motor you," rejoined Robin promptly. "Hunt, at 'The White Duck,' has a decent car, and I know he'll let me have it. Tuesday next, isn't it?"

"Yes." Marigold nibbled a bun, her sleek little head on one side, her violet eyes fixed on Robin's lean brown face, with an air of challenge. "It will be a lovely drive—moonlight, too, to make it perfect," she suggested.

"Oh, good!" returned Robin tranquilly. "Be easier to find the road. I'm not altogether sure of it."

Marigold's delicate brows drew together in a little frown of annoyance. How provokingly matter of fact he was! His impersonal attitude piqued her immeasurably, spurred her on with the desire to rouse him to admiration or anger, something, anything that would shake him out of this maddening and unnatural self-control. Tea was over, and Robin was smoking placidly, looking absurdly masculine in the blue-cushioned chair, ere an inspiration came to her. Twin imps of mischief shone in her eyes as she said casually:

"I wonder if you'd care to see my frock? It's only just come from town, and I'd like an outside and entirely unbiassed opinion."

"You shall have mine for what it's worth," replied Robin, "though I warn you I'm no authority on chiffons," he added as Marigold sped away with a gay little laugh.

It was twenty minutes later and Robin had seen many sweet domestic pictures in his blue smoke rings, when she returned. In his heart he had been picturing her as wife and mother; he looked up to see her a figure so utterly divorced from domesticity that the revulsion of feeling was almost overwhelming. She wore a low-necked sleeveless frock of primrose coloured chiffon, the skirt miraculously bunchy and short, the bodice held up over her ivory shoulders by slender silver chains. Her silk stockings matched the frock to a hair, while on her twinkling feet were shoes of yellow and silver brocade. Standing there with her dark head flung back half-defiantly, her red lips parted, her pale cheeks tinted to a delicate rose, she seemed to him a creature from another world, an artificial world, in which he had no part.

"Well, what do you think of it?" Marigold advanced to where he stood, gazing at her with steady eyes that gave no sign of approval. "Don't you like it?"

"No." Robin rapped out the word almost savagely. "Oh, I know it's a wonderful frock," as Marigold's face fell, "on a London stage it might pass, but—I may as well be plain—it's not the frock a decent man would like his womenkind to wear. There's not enough of it."

For a moment Marigold stared at him in complete stupefaction. Then she threw back her head and laughed, a provoking little laugh that only served to intensify the tense lines about Robin's resolute mouth.

"Dear me, how particular we are!" she mocked. "I'm sorry it doesn't meet with your approval, because I'm going to wear it for the dance—it's the only glad rag I have that's suitable. You must turn your face to the wall when I come on."

"I don't think that'll be necessary," retorted the man coolly. "I don't fancy you'll wear the frock after all."

"Indeed!" Marigold shrugged her shoulders with an admirable assumption of indifference. "And may I ask who will prevent me?"

"I shall." There was such a quiet conviction in Robin's tone, such an air of complete assurance on his set face, that in spite of her outward calm a little thrill of apprehension stirred at Marigold's heart. "I hope you will promise not to wear it, because I ask you, because I tell you that it is not the frock in which to dance before a roomful of soldiers, not a frock which a gentlewoman—I am old-fashioned enough to like that term—would wear under any circumstances whatever."

"I don't profess to be a gentlewoman—nothing so out-of-date," said Marigold pertly, "and I really can't sacrifice my chance of dazzling the Army because of your Puritanical whims."

"Very well! Now we know where we are," was the imperturbable reply, as Marigold flitted to the door preparatory to going up to change the despised garments. "I must be

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off now. Remember we've got to tackle the French beans in the morning."

His manner was calm and impersonal as usual, but to Marigold it held a veiled threat. She went upstairs slowly, obsessed by an uneasy feeling that the episode was by no means ended, that this masterful man would yet find a way to bend her to his will.

She was somewhat reassured next morning when Robin turned up and proceeded with the day's work as usual, making no reference to the occurrence of the night before. After all, she had perhaps been unduly apprehensive; Robin had probably thought better of his interference, and decided to let the matter rest—so she argued with herself, with lamentable disregard for the young officer's tenacity of purpose. By the time the day of the concert had arrived the incident had sunk to insignificant proportions in her mind, and she put on the primrose frock without a qualm.

Robin was waiting for her in the hall as she came down. He ignored the frock, but there was a grim set about his lips as he helped her into her black satin cloak and tucked her into the car outside; Marigold, excited at the thought of her approaching triumph, failed to notice it, and chattered away gaily as they slid between the scented hedgerows.

Their road led through the village and across the open heath; half-way across it divided, one arm leading to Ridgeway, the other to a distant hamlet called Watershot. It was not until Robin, disregarding the signpost, deliberately turned the car along the Watershot road that Marigold was seized with a sudden apprehension.

"You're going the wrong way," she exclaimed, laying an eager hand on his khaki sleeve. "The other road leads to Ridgeway."

"We're not going to Ridgeway," replied Robin coolly, his keen eyes on the white ribbon of road that lay ahead. "The drive to Watershot is quite a pretty one, I assure you."

"But I'm going to dance at Ridgeway!" Marigold's voice was tremulous with agitation, her violet eyes flashed angrily.

"I think not!" Robin's perfect composure whipped her to added fury. "Not in that frock. I told you I couldn't allow it, you know. I always keep my word."

"How dare—oh, how dare you?" The girl tugged ineffectually at his arm, her face between the primrose tulle scarf glowing like some beautiful tropical flower. Robin slowed up instantly.

"I think we'd better have this out before we finish up in the ditch," he said calmly. "I told you I could not have you appearing in public in that—er—very limited frock. It's not the kind of garment I care for my future wife to be seen in."

Marigold met his steady gaze with flashing eyes. "Your wife!" All the scorn at her command went into the words. "I shall never be that."

"Not at present, perhaps," was the ready rejoinder. "We'll waive that point for the moment. I must ask you not to try and climb out of the car," he added, for Marigold had risen and was endeavouring to scramble out. "I don't want to use force, but you must see for yourself that those slippers are utterly inadequate for a rough road such as this."

Marigold paid no heed; she was too angry to realise what her companion was saying. All she felt was an overwhelming desire to escape from this calm, masterful man who asserted his authority in so audacious a manner. She made a wild plunge—the next moment she was seized in two firm, unyielding arms and forced gently back into her seat. By the time she had recovered from her amazement sufficiently to speak, Robin had started the car and they were gliding slowly along the road to Watershot.

"I think — I think you're the most abominable person I ever met," she gasped at length, winking back the tears of humiliation and rage that threatened to overcome her.

"I'm sorry, but I had no alternative," rejoined Robin calmly. "I didn't want to do you out of the concert; it was a regrettable necessity. It's such a lovely evening we may as well have a drive before we go home. The air will cool us down."

For nearly an hour they sped along the winding roads, and the first pale stars shone in the lavender sky ere they drew up at the little gate of The End Cottage. Robin's conversational efforts meeting with no response from Marigold, he, too, relapsed into silence, divided between a desire to shake her into submission and a subtle longing to cover her rebellious red lips with kisses.

As for Marigold, she ignored him entirely, even when he alighted and held the door of the car open for her. The sight of him standing there erect and self-possessed, his grey eyes inscrutable, the ghost of a smile on his resolute lips, goaded her to fury. With a movement of utter contempt she drew her satin wrap about her, and, with a defiant tilt of her graceful little head, brushed past him and sailed into the house.

When Robin called the next day he was met by Mrs. Horner, who informed him with much lamentation that Miss Marigold had departed by the early train for London.

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taking all her possessions with her and leaving no clue as to her address.

II.

To Marigold, fresh from the green tranquillity of Little Brooking, Chelsea seemed a roaring, sun-baked desolation. The studio, with its garish draperies and makeshift furniture, appeared tawdry and uncomfortable; she longed for the dainty chintzes and blue-and-white china of The End Cottage, for the scent of the honeysuckle that clambered round her bedroom window, and the dear country sounds that ushered in the peaceful days. Her old friends gathered round her loyally, but she was out of tune with them; their boisterous laughter jarred on her, their restless ways and blatant artificiality were an affront to her newfound love of nature, her new appreciation of sincerity.

Through the hot September days she tried to distract herself with attempts to pick up the threads of her old occupations. But she found no satisfaction in any of them; they were as empty of interest as the long-haired, suave-mannered youths who provoked reluctant comparison with the clean-limbed, brown-faced man whose image, struggle as she might, lurked ever in the back of her mind. The old Bohemian revels had lost their appeal for her, the old ways of life their flavour; whereas once it was the limelight that had attracted her, now it was the clear wash of starlight, the silver dew on the emerald grass, the golden dust of buttercups in the rolling meadows.

September came in with a heat that made Marigold pine for the open spaces, and the fresh heather-scented breezes in her face. The longing to have a peep at the cottage of happy memories grew overmastering, until one golden day it became too much for her, and she journeyed down to Little Brooking, hoping that in a glimpse of the country she might find peace unto her soul.

**Marigold found herself in his arms, held there in a gentle but masterful grip . . . As his hold tightened she raised her eyes, shining with the light of glad surrender.** [*Page* 458, *col* 2.]

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The sun was bathing the garden in a glory of gossamer gold when Marigold pushed open the gate and stole up the flagged path between the sunflowers and the crimson dahlias. It struck her with a faint surprise that the grass was velvety as ever, the beds devoid of weeds, and that there were no signs of the neglect which six weeks' absence would lead one to expect. Rather to her amazement, the front door yielded to her hand—she had anticipated difficulties—and she stepped inside and entered the little sitting-room.

All was in perfect order—the windows with their chintz curtains clean and set wide open, the brass candlesticks and fire-irons polished, and no trace of dust on the simple fumed oak furniture.

It was the same in the bedrooms—the flowered bed-spreads were fresh and clean, the stained floor and rugs guiltless of dust. Marigold's eyes grew round with wonder. Was Mrs. Horner the good fairy? Had Lucy perhaps given her instructions to come in and keep the place habitable? But Mrs. Horner would not cut the grass or minister to the garden. She was still pondering this aspect of the case when she went outside and made her way down the garden, hallowed by a companionship the memory of which tore at her heartstrings. Instinctively the tears sprang to her eyes, blinding her as she stooped over a bed of phlox, so that she did not see a well-knit, khaki clad figure coming towards her from the kitchen garden.

"So you've come at last! I knew you would!" It was the old confident voice that greeted her, the old baffling smile that shone out as she lifted her bare head with its sheath of satiny hair.

"How did you know?" Marigold could think of nothing else to say, for the touch of Robin's hand brought the hot colour to her cheeks, and set her heart beating wildly beneath the old rose jumper.

"I did know!" persisted this amazing young man. "I should hardly have bribed Mrs. Horner to keep the place clean, and spent all my spare time working in the garden if I hadn't felt sure that, sooner or later, you would have to come back."

"Then it *was* you!" To Marigold it seemed all along she had known in her subconscious mind that Robin had engineered the miracle. Nevertheless the old spirit of resistance flamed up in her at his air of complete assurance, urging her to conceal the real reason for her return. "I came to get my frock—the primrose chiffon you had the bad taste to criticise," she said. "I'm going back to town to-night."

"I don't think so." Robin's face wore the determined, inscrutable look it had worn on another memorable occasion when she had measured her strength against his and been forced to surrender. "That's simply an excuse. You came because you wanted to come, because you couldn't help yourself, because you're out of tune with London, and the spell of the country has you in its grip."

Marigold said nothing. Her eyes were downcast, her long dark lashes drooped on her rounded cheeks. Robin went on imperturbably:

"There was another reason, too. Shall I tell you what it was?" he asked, his compelling grey eyes fixed on her tremulous face.

"If you like!" Marigold felt her defences slipping away as his big brown hands closed upon hers. Her petty defiance seemed suddenly absurd, like that of a toy pistol matched against a service rifle.

"It was because you knew I was waiting for you here, because you wanted me, and knew that if you did not come I should search the world until I held you in my arms—like this."

And at that Marigold found herself in his arms, held there in a gentle but masterful grip. For a moment she struggled, then as his hold tightened she raised her eyes, shining with the light of glad surrender, and the delicious joy which is a woman's tribute to masculine force.

"Was it worth coming for, sweetheart?" he whispered as he tilted her face to his. And though Marigold's answer was inaudible the touch of her lips told him that the world and the glory thereof were his.

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# A NAVAL COURT-MARTIAL

By John S. Margerison.

**Trial by Court-Martial is a dread ordeal, and to the uninitiated a mysterious one. In the following sketch Mr. John S. Margerison gives a vivid picture of the manner in which a Naval Court-Martial is conducted, the prisoner being a young Lieutenant accused of ramming a sister destroyer.**

Eight o'clock in the morning; from the two score ships lying in the harbour crashed forth the bands and the bugles as the Navy paid its daily tribute to its Ensign; from the great flagship crashed forth a single gun, and when the ceremony was over a Union Jack floated from the flagship's peak, telling the world that, this day, some more than usually unfortunate wight was to stand his trial for a Service offence—was, before a council of his peers or superiors, to undergo that dread ordeal known as a Court-Martial.

Tony Bings, the Yeoman of Signals, who had just hoisted the fateful piece of bunting into place, was at pains to explain the ritual of Courts-Martial to an inquiring signal boy, what time he turned up with the halliards.

"It's a Lieutenant what lost a destroyer through ramming the other day, sonny," he observed. "And he'll be tried by Commanders and Captains. Five of 'em there'll be, all in their best cocked hats and dangling swords, smothered with gold lace, stars, bars, orders, decorations, medals, and whatnots, and they'll give him a fair doing afore he's through with 'em. If he was an Admiral he'd be tried by Admirals, but if he was a Captain he'd only get the same Court as now—which is exactly the same as you or I'd get, my boy. But, take my tip, if it ever comes to your turn to face a Court-Martial, go to bed in Davy's Locker—it's fair hell being the prisoner at them sort of petty sessions."

The youngster nodded sagely, though he had not understood half what his senior had said, and registered a mental vow that, during his Service career, he would steer clear of anything likely to bring him into contact with a Court-Martial.

The President of the Court rose to his feet grandiloquently, with a clank of his sword scabbard and a sweep of his cocked hat. It was precisely ten of the clock—the hour appointed for the opening of business in a million places—not one, however, so strange a place as this. Five gilded naval officers—two Captains and three Commanders—were seated at a long, green baize-covered table on which, ready to hand, were pens, paper, and ink. Each wore his most-bedecked uniform; each had his sword dangling by his side; each regretted bitterly the mandate which made him a member of that Service Court.

"The Court is open," declared the President. "Bring in the prisoner."

The words were spoken austerely; they were the form decreed by regulation, and were identical for Admiral and scallywag stoker. A third Captain entered the room noiselessly, and took a chair a little behind the President, but over towards the right; he was the Prosecutor—much against his will; while at the foot of the table, with an official shorthand writer under his immediate eye, stood a Staff-Paymaster, who, but three short days before, had been playing golf with the accused. He was the Deputy-Judge-Advocate, and corresponds with the Clerk to the Magistrates in civil life.

A door to the right slowly opened, and there marched in a young, sea-stained, tanned Lieutenant. His head was held erect, his eyes were complacent—his whole bearing bespoke confidence. Straight to the left of the Deputy-Judge-Advocate he stepped, then halted, while, with drawn sword, the brother officer who had him in charge took his place on the right. The prisoner was under escort.

"All present?" queried the Staff-Paymaster. An affirmative nod from the President, and then the sonorous names sounding as the roll of the Court was read.

"Do you object to being tried by any of the members at this Court?" The President was speaking once more, but the prisoner was more interested in watching the flick of light and shade across the cabin skylight as

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the lazily floating Union Jack swayed to and fro at the peak. A nudge from his warder recalled him, and, as one letter-perfect, he glanced swiftly round at the well-remembered faces of his jurors and judges, and smiled faintly.

"No, sir," he replied.

"Swear the Court," ordered the President.

Immediately the five members rose to their feet, put on their cocked hats, and, one after the other, swore to administer justice without fear, favour, partiality, or affection, in tones that were far from being in keeping with their alert eyes and determined chins. The prisoner knew it all so well—knew the formula that had been handed down from ancient days—and during the swearing of the Court was debating in his mind whether he would buy a new hilt-knot for the sword which reposed in front of the President—he had surrendered it on formal arrest—or scrap the weapon altogether and purchase a new one.

The oath taken, the Deputy-Judge-Advocate read out the charge, which set forth, with a wealth of legal phraseology, that the Court had been summoned to try one Lieutenant Walter Carstairs, "For that he did severally and generally, etc., etc." In plain terms the Lieutenant was to be asked to state exactly why he had slammed the bows of his ship into the side of a sister, and why, having done so, he had allowed her to sink in the Channel. The circumstantial letter, setting forth the charge, having been read, the prisoner was asked to plead.

"Not guilty, sir," he said confidently.

"We will hear what you have to say," said the President.

The Captains and Commanders settled themselves, the shorthand-writer grabbed a freshly-pointed pencil and stood by to work at high pressure, the Prosecutor leant forward slightly and listened intently.

"On the night of the seventh May my ship, H.M.S. *Dart*, was, in company with the Seventeenth Flotilla, patrolling between longitude so-and-so and latitude so-and-so," stated the Lieutenant. "H.M.S. *Poinard* was in command. Shortly before midnight we received warning that an enemy flotilla had left harbour and were steering towards the East Coast; we thereupon altered course to meet and engage them, which we did at one-eleven precisely."

The prisoner's tone was absolutely matter of fact—as cold as the writing in which he had logged the entrance into action and the collision.

"*Dart* engaged the third ship in the line, and was immediately subjected to heavy shell fire from that ship and her next astern."

The Prosecutor nodded—he had led the flotilla during that action. "In spite of the fire, however, I discharged both torpedoes, and went into action with all guns. My bridge was shot away, and with it my steering gear, and before I could connect up my lower wheel, *Dart* had swerved towards the enemy line at full speed, and H.M.S. *Stiletto*, my next ahead, had turned out of line—because her rudder was shot away, as I afterwards ascertained—and presented her beam to my bows.

"I immediately stopped both engines, but my ship had sufficient way on to ram *Stiletto* abeam. The midship plates were smashed flat, and I at once saw that if I went astern the water would rush into *Stiletto* and sink her before the hands could be rescued. So, in spite of the heavy raking fire to which both ships were still subjected, I rang down for speed on my engines once more, and kept my bows fixed in *Stiletto's* side till all her company had jumped from her on to my forecastle. Then when I went astern the sea broke down my foremost bulkhead; we filled"—here the Lieutenant's voice broke slightly—"and sank. And that's all, sir."

The Commanders gulped hard, and the Captains said something quite inaudible. Each had experience of a similar predicament; each was in sympathy with this young officer who had acted up to Service traditions in every way, yet the Court must sit and try him fairly and without bias, for such is the law of the Navy.

"Call the first witness," ordered the President.

Again the door opened; again a Lieutenant entered. He had been until recently Commander of the destroyer *Stiletto*, and but the day before prisoner at a Court-Martial. He took the oath, and related, in simple language, how his ship had come to be out of control, and how, in his opinion, *Dart* had done all that was humanly possible to repair the error of which she had, all unwittingly, been guilty.

Followed then the helmsman who had been at the wheel when the ships struck. He had come straight from hospital; a bandage around his head and a slung arm told of the biting wounds inflicted by shrapnel when the wheel was shot away.

"I was at the wheel, sir," he said, "when there was a sudden burst of shell and hot slivers of metal flying about. The wheel was wrenched clean out of me hands, and the old ship took the bit between her teeth, so to speak, and next thing I knew was she had jammed herself into the next ahead. 'Ring down half-speed ahead,' says the skipper, and I managed to crawl to the port

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**The President picked up the sword by its blade. "Lieutenant Walter Carstairs," he continued, tendering the hilt towards the prisoner. "the finding of this Court . . . is that you are Not Guilty of negligence of duty in that the vessel intrusted to your command did ram another vessel and thereafter founder."** *[Page 462, col. 2.]*



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telegraph and pull the indicator round. And that's all, sir."

The prisoner's Friend here took up the tale. He produced certificates from every ship in which the prisoner had served—certificates which testified to his character, sobriety, and ability—credentials which would have carried him to command anywhere. Step by step he traced the prisoner's career, from Dartmouth to China during the Boxer Rising, where the Friend made the most of a mention in dispatches, to the Persian Gulf, where the prisoner had earned much *kudos*, praise, and prize-money by his zeal in the suppression of gun and slave running; through the earlier part of the war, where he had served efficiently in older destroyers, and to the last command, where for eight months he had carried through his various duties well and faithfully and without mishap.

"Clear the Court!" ordered the President at the conclusion of the speech for the defence. Prisoner, witnesses, and Friend turned and went, and, as soon as the door was closed behind them, the President turned to his fellows. In crisp, terse, direct words the President summed up the case.

"It seems to me," he said, "that Lieutenant Carstairs cannot be blamed for the happening which brought him before us. A ship with her wheel shot away and another with her rudder missing, careering at full speed and at close intervals over a narrow space of sea are bound to meet somewhere. In fact, I think he should be complimented on his presence of mind during the whole affair. What is your verdict, gentlemen?"

"Exonerated without blame," said the senior Captain, and the others acquiesced.

"Plucky youngster to think of keeping his bows jammed in while under a hot fire," said one.

"Over a hundred good men would have been lost had he backed astern after striking," conceded a second.

"Not guilty!" bluntly said the other three.

The President nodded. He lifted the naked sword which lay on the table before him and turned it so that its tarnished hilt lay towards the place where the prisoner had stood.

"The Court is open," he announced crisply, and the Deputy-Judge-Advocate communicated the news to those in the passage outside. They all trooped back, the prisoner and his guard—they had been discussing the latest revue during the interval in preference to more judicial matters—the witnesses and the Prosecutor. And as each entered the Court-room his eyes sought that tell-tale sword, and even the Prosecutor heaved a faint sigh of relief when he saw it lying hilt outermost.

"Prisoner at the bar," said the President, "you have been tried by Court-Martial in accordance with the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, and in accordance with Clause so-and-so of the Articles of War. The circumstantial letter setting forth the evidence against you has been read in your presence, and a copy has been handed to you for private perusal. What you had to offer in your defence has been carefully weighed, as also has the evidence adduced by Lieutenant James Snow, Royal Navy, late Commander of His Majesty's Torpedo Boat Destroyer *Stiletto*, and the evidence of Petty Officer James Murphy, coxswain of His Majesty's Torpedo Boat Destroyer *Dart*, and the Court have, after careful consideration, arrived at their unanimous verdict."

The President picked up the sword by its blade.

"Lieutenant Walter Carstairs," he continued, tendering the hilt towards the prisoner, "the finding of this Court, without fear, favour, prejudice, partiality, or affection, is that you are Not Guilty of negligence of duty in that the vessel intrusted to your command did ram another vessel and thereafter founder, and this Court exonerates you from all blame therein."

The President turned to the Deputy-Judge-Advocate.

"Remove the prisoner," he ordered. "Haul down the Jack! The Court is dissolved."

Business was over. The gold-laced superior officers, having discharged their duty, thronged around the late prisoner in the corridor and offered him their congratulations, and not less hearty or sincere in his praise was that Captain to whom had been deputed, by authority, the unwelcome job of Prosecutor.

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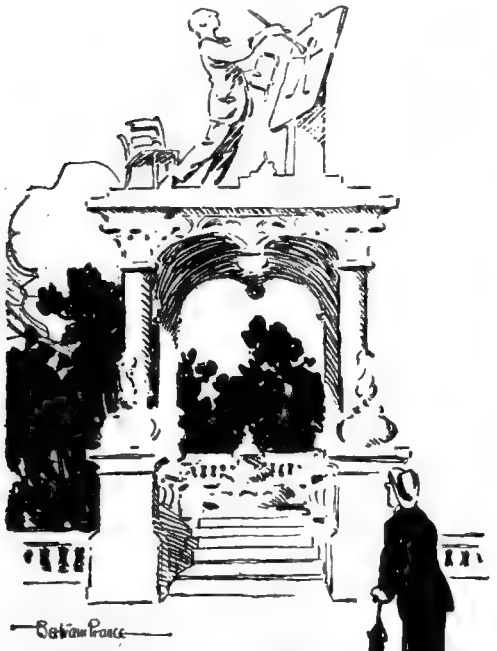
# "IF WISHES WERE HORSES—"

By Lesbia Robinson.

*Outbursts on Acquiring Riches, Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.*



Mr. Bertram Prance is of opinion that he would never survive the shock of sudden and unexpected wealth, and therefore suggests that the money might be used for the erection of a lasting reminder of his untimely end.

Most of us have our own ideas as to what we should do if we became suddenly rich; some of us would be too stunned to do anything, and in any case we could hardly be held responsible for our actions for at least a week. A sudden access of riches sometimes produces most unexpected results; some people, labouring under a shock of this kind, have even been known to pay their debts!

Given rich relations whom you are certain to outlive, your future is yet by no means assured. They are generally distressingly healthy and without right feeling of any kind. They are quite capable of leaving their money to a Cats' Home or a Temperance Society, and ignoring your claims altogether. Or they may purposely mislead you, like the old gentleman who, promising his nephew "something substantial" in his will, bequeathed to him an ancient and moth-eaten four-poster! Wherefore put not your trust in rich relations, since, unlike harvest and seedtime, they have been frequently known to fail.

People who indulge in "expectations" to an undue extent are apt to reap their just reward, as was the case with Silas Slyman. Ever since he was a youth Silas had pinned his hopes on his Uncle James, a man of substance and addicted to bronchitis. He was not an amiable person, but both Silas and his wife bore with him cheerfully, since his fortune was ultimately to lift them to the giddy heights of finger-bowls and a carriage-drive.

It was Mrs. Slyman who, when he developed a bad chill at their house, insisted on his staying and allowing her to nurse him, confident that her ministrations would receive fitting reward at a later date. Uncle

Mr. Cottington Taylor would celebrate a rise to fortune by the ruthless destruction of all that appertains to art, and thereafter saunter through life as a gentleman of leisure.

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"They Wouldn't Believe Me!"—Mr. Treyer Evans declares that in the unlikely event of his becoming rich, an incredulous bank would almost certainly refuse to cash his timidly-proffered cheques.

Silas was not a model patient, and, unless continually watched, had a playful habit of removing his poultices and dropping them behind the bed. It was when he flung a bottle of embrocation at Mrs. Slyman's head that she decided to enlist the services of a professional nurse.

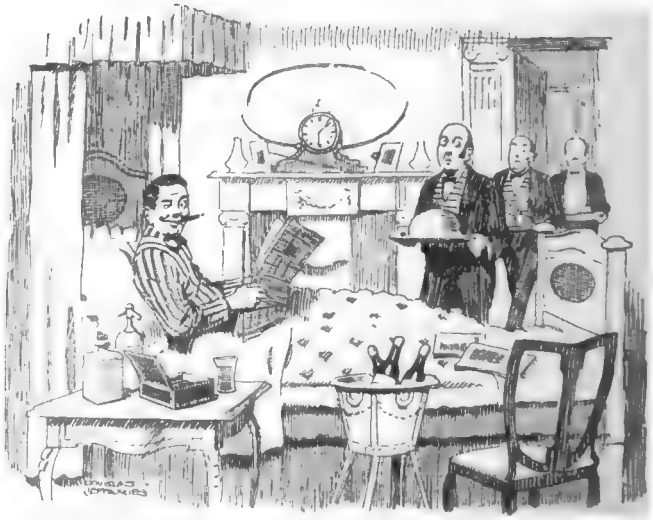
Uncle Silas was a man of coarse fibre and unpleasant candour, otherwise he would not have repaid Mrs. Slyman's devotion by exhibiting undue partiality for Nurse Hawkins. In her hands he became as a lamb, took his medicine as though it were nectar from the gods, and suffered poultices with patient resignation. Mr. and Mrs. Slyman began to grow uneasy—the finger-bowls receded into the distance, and vanished completely when, on his first day downstairs, Uncle Silas announced that Nurse Hawkins had promised to look after him permanently, and the wedding would take place as soon as he was fit to drive to church.

Mr. and Mrs. Slyman now hold no intercourse with Uncle Silas, and their wedding present was a mustard colour *jardinière* whose destination had originally been a rummage sale.

Some people will tell you that riches do not appeal to them, but on inquiry you will usually find they have elementary notions of truth or that there is insanity in the family. They may not hanker after the fleshpots of Egypt, but they probably harbour a weakness for antiques or have discovered some new explosive which only needs money to bring it to perfection. Given the money there is nothing to prevent them acquiring all the latest things in genuine antiques or blowing themselves into eternity at their earliest convenience.

Taking it all round, there are points in favour of supplying your fortune instead of depending on the whims of other people. Horse-racing and Stock-Exchange deals may be in normal times short cuts to opulence, while patent medicines have also been known to lift their proprietors into prosperity at a leap. The great drawback of slower methods is that by the time you have amassed enough to entitle you to a champagne and Rolls-Royce existence you are too exhausted to want anything but gruel and a Bath-chair.

Sometimes the sudden transition from humble circumstances to a lordly position is fraught with disaster. A case in point was Caleb Codd, who presided over a fried-fish shop in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch. One day he was wrapping portions of cod in newspaper and cracking jokes with be-shawled ladies in curling-pins, the next he found himself in possession of £150,000, a legacy from a brother in Australia of whom he had not heard for years.



Should he ever become wealthy, Mr. Douglas Jefferies intends to retire to his bed, and, waited upon by highly-trained servants, embark upon lengthy repose.

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A snug little house in the suburbs was the modest ambition of Mr. Codd and his wife, but the lawyer decreed otherwise. To him it seemed a favourable opportunity to secure a tenant for an old and moth-eaten house in Kensington which chanced to be his property, and being possessed of a glib tongue and persuasive manner, he goaded Caleb Codd into signing a three years' lease. He also supplied a housekeeper—curiously enough, a needy cousin of his own!—who engaged servants and took control of the establishment.

The vain endeavour on the part of Mr. Starr Wood to imagine himself rich resulted in a feverish nightmare, wherein he figured as a great politician, his final triumph being his coronation as King of Greece.

Caleb and his wife did not take kindly to their surroundings; the servants treated them with the exaggerated politeness that is worse than impertinence, and the cook insisted on concocting elaborate dishes with high-sounding names, and refused utterly to provide the steak and onions or stewed tripe of their Shoreditch days.

The blow fell when one night she sent up a sole so shattered in body that it looked like a jig-saw puzzle. Caleb Codd could stand it no longer, and descended to the kitchen vowing to massacre the cook,

"A Personal Touch"—Mr. Reg. F. Smith intends to celebrate his good fortune by having a heart-to-heart talk with a certain autocratic "uncle," at whose hands he has suffered full often.

whereupon she and all the other servants left in a body rather than work for a master of such humble origin.

The housekeeper's departure completed the happiness of Caleb and his wife. "I should never have had the courage to give her notice," Mrs. Caleb confided to her husband, "but now she's gone we can let this house and take that cosy little place at Clapham Common, with a girl to do the rough work and sensible Christian food instead of fal-lals."

"And if I feel like cookin' a bit of fish for supper I can do it," added Caleb. And he did!

"Meeting His Creditors"—the novel sensation of waylaying his tailor and other creditors, and drawing cheques in their favour, is Mr. Thomas Henry's idea of really enjoying a newly-acquired fortune.

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ANOTHER DELIGHTFUL STORY OF MR. GUMBLAY.

# THE LATTER REIGN

By F. E. Baily.

Mr. Gumblay, invalided out of the Army, has devoted much of his enforced idleness to the assistance of those friends whose love affairs demand the magic touch of an expert. How he, himself, finally falls a victim to Cupid's dart and qualifies for the last shell-case, is related in the following entertaining story.

I.

The soft hush of spring lay over London. Mr. Cyprian Gumblay (invalided), looking out from his Half Moon Street window, like Jezebel from the gates of Jezreel, saw a female milkman in breeches and gaiters vending the lactic juices of the cow, and took her for an omen.

"She is typical of the season and the times," he said to his soul. "She represents spring because she is a girl, and the times because she is doing a man's work in those trousers. I, too, feel the spring in my blood—such of it as there is left. I have an impulse to crown myself with a chaplet of flowers and go piping through the lanes. Unfortunately, flowers do not suit me, and I cannot pipe."

He withdrew his tall, slight form, clad in immaculate tweeds, from the window, a thoughtful expression on his thin, rather pale face, stretched himself in an armchair, and lit a cigarette. His eyes surveyed ironically one shell-case upon the mantelpiece. Mr. Gumblay was in the habit of presenting these, suitably converted by cunning goldsmiths, to such of his friends as risked the vicissitudes of matrimony. The last he was keeping in case he, too, one day . . .

"In the spring," he murmured, "one can wanton amid emotions as at no other season. I will make a pilgrimage to the shrines of my dead youth. Given that the earliest emotions are undoubtedly the more fragrant, I will award the palm to the episode of the unknown flapper. I will invoke the shade of Leslie, her ripe-corn plait, her grey eyes. Now, which is the most direct route to Poldreath? The Bath Road, I suppose."

Mr. Gumblay, mildly enthusiastic, pressed the electric bell. There came in response Lucas, the impeccable servant, bred up in the family from boy to man.

"Lucas," observed Mr. Gumblay, "pack for a fortnight, in a mild climate. Have the grey Vauxhall at the door at nine a.m. tomorrow. See yourself that she is filled up with oil and petrol and greased all over. I include the springs in that remark. We are going West, in the literal sense, to-morrow."

"Very good, sir," responded Lucas impassively. "In view of your delicate health, Mr. Cyprian, sir, I may say respectfully that I am very glad. You need a change sadly, sir."

"I am about to lave my soul in the ambrosial springs, the golden waters of Yesterday," retorted Mr. Gumblay. "You had better pack five hundred cigarettes, A. E. Housman's poems, and a picnic-basket for two. There is nothing like being on the safe side."

II.

Two days later Mr. Gumblay, who never hurried if he could possibly help it, steered his grey darling through those ineffable streets where Poldreath lies dreaming in the Western sunlight. He arrived one perfect spring noonday with a faint haze glimmering over the sea and river, at the mouth of which is Poldreath, winding back into the land between green banks of reckless and affecting beauty. Faintly dizzy from the soft Cornish air, like the sigh of all the sleepers in the world, he avoided, on principle, the Poldreath Hotel, pulling up instead at "The Golden Prospect." There they gave him luncheon, and afterwards, having changed into a suit of flannels, Mr. Gumblay, taking a walking-stick in his hand, set forth from his modest hostelry by the harbour to climb the steep main street of Poldreath and emerge on the hither side of the town.

It was his purpose to rediscover the halcyon hunting-grounds of Youth, which he might recognise by a faint, still-fragrant trail of withered rose-leaves. He sought, in fact, a certain beach, where—barely nineteen—he had played with the ripe-corn tresses of

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fifteen-year-old Leslie, surely the most beautiful flapper ever vouchsafed to a rejoicing world.

Living mentally in his nineteenth year, Mr. Gumblay passed through Poldreath and began to leave the town behind. His road lay at the back of a certain house built upon a sort of tiny cape that jutted out into the mouth of the river. A little arm of the sea here ran up into the land, and the road had been carried across a bridge. Pausing momentarily, Mr. Gumblay leant his elbows upon the parapet and gazed down into what formed a species of private waterway to Triton Court.

There was a landing-place cut into the dark rock which, shelving upward, formed eventually the base upon which stood Triton Court and its grounds. Towards this landing-place a girl sculled herself in a varnished dinghy. The sleeves of her white sweater, turned back a little way, exposed the cream of her forearms. She handled the sculls with the ease of the expert. Her hair lacked any covering, and the spring sunlight danced over the ripe-corn masses of it.

Mr. Gumblay gazed, fascinated. For one second she glanced upward, showing a little, firm-chinned, clear-cut face with a delightfully dogged set to the perfect line of her mouth. He could have sworn her eyes were grey, and the tilt of the head was unmistakable.

The beautiful maiden came alongside with great exactitude, and stepped ashore with the dinghy's painter in her hand. She threw over a couple of fenders, moored the little craft fore and aft, and stood for a second looking out over the sunlit waves. Then she began to climb the steps.

Mr. Gumblay, aided by the brevity of a delightfully hung drill skirt, confirmed his suspicions.

"Those are certainly Leslie's ankles," he murmured. "Now, why the blazes is she down here, I wonder? Perhaps it is the spring in her case also. Well, I will go and find out."

Five minutes later he was knocking at the front door of Triton Court.

Leslie herself opened it. She stood there, framed in the doorway, with the air of adorable independence which, even in his crude and early years, had so fascinated Mr. Gumblay.

He raised his hat.

"Good-afternoon, Leslie," he said politely. "You look more delightful than ever. The years have merely gilded refined gold and painted the lily. How do you do?"

"I think you must be mad!" began the lady a little abruptly. Then a certain weary longing in Mr. Gumblay's pale face diluted the venom of her glance; she seemed to be listening to some voice from the past; she hesitated.

"In other years you were not so unkind," murmured Mr. Gumblay reminiscently. "Don't you remember a delightful youth named Cyprian who wrote heavenly verses and tried to persuade you that you were the most beautiful thing in existence? I would call you Miss Blank, only I never knew your other name any more than you did mine. That made it so romantic, you remember. So," ended Mr. Gumblay patiently, "I shall just call you Leslie, whether you ask me to come in or keep me standing on the mat like the people who hawk obsolete encyclopædias."

"I have done many foolish things in my life," retorted the lady with very faint enthusiasm. "However, do come in, and we can discuss the matter. I seem to remember a big, overgrown boy somewhat vaguely."

Mr. Gumblay followed her into a cool, low-ceilinged drawing-room exhibiting the decorative peculiarities of the Victorian era.

Mr. Gumblay sought repose in an armchair of a sort. Leslie sat down on a settee and crossed one leg over the other. Outside the little waves said "*a-a-a-ah! a-a-aah!*" as they broke upon the beach, and all the land was green. "It will be hard luck," reflected Mr. Gumblay, "if she and I cannot be a little green too!"

"What are you doing in this part, Leslie dear?" he asked, while a stout, elderly woman brought in the necessaries of tea with much panting.

Leslie stared thoughtfully at the opposite wall.

"I've run away," she said at last, "and my name, by the way, is Miss Stokes."

"Mine is Mr. Gumblay."

"My father wants me to marry a man whom I decline to marry. This is my father's house. I came here because it's cheaper than an hotel. He doesn't know. I will not marry Sir Julius Tubb. He makes 'Tubb's Mighty Mangles—They Turn *So* Easily.' No doubt you've seen the advertisements?"

"No," replied Mr. Gumblay, "I have not; but then it has never been necessary for me to read mangle advertisements."

"My father," went on Miss Stokes almost passionately, "is wealthy, and consequently worships wealth. He is the inventor of the Stokes' Self-Contained Fish-and-Chips Fryer. He sets you up on the instalment system, and you pay out of income. There is an explanatory book thrown in, which any fool can understand. The profits are something like two hundred and fifty per cent."

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"Then you must be an heiress, Leslie," commented Mr. Gumblay mildly.

"Not at all. Unless I wed Sir Julius Tubb I shall be cut off with a shilling."

"How vindictive these old gentlemen in the wholesale line do get!" remarked Mr. Gumblay dispassionately. "They lord it even over their own flesh and blood. What are you going to choose, Leslie—the shilling or the mangles?"

"Heaven knows," replied Leslie without enthusiasm, pouring out tea and biting her under lip. "Frankly, Cyprian—that is, Mr. Gumblay—I came down here for a little relief. I want to forget all that is sordid, and live in my imagination for a little. I had succeeded till you arrived."

"I came," observed the guest, "to revive the memories of our early love, Leslie. Why bother about Sir Julius Tubb when we have met once more in the lovely land of Lyonnesse? My dear Leslie, let us be children again—just for a week, at any rate."

Leslie turned and threw up her chin with all the old *chien* of her adorable flapperhood.

"Cyprian," she said, and lazy devils laughed in her eyes, "let's hang everything and go to the devil our own way!"

"I can throw in a car, a tea-basket, five hundred cigarettes, and a talent for all branches of crime. When shall we start?" queried Mr. Gumblay politely.

"When you will. Personally, I'm quite reckless."

An idea occurred to Mr. Gumblay.

"Of course, Leslie, I ought to explain that I have no money either. You see me with an expensive car and a manservant, but these are mere relics of the gilded past. The car will go when I am sold up, and so will Lucas. I haven't even my Army pay now. But you, I know, will help me to engineer a decent flutter before the crash comes."

She looked across at him with a new respect in her eyes.

"Why, of course I will, Cyprian!"

"Then please dine with me to-night at the Poldreath Hotel. I'll call for you in the car, because I believe the Poldreath Hotel insists on your wearing a bodiceless frock. Now I will leave you, Leslie; meanwhile let us think out ideas for our last guilty splendour."

III.

"Leslie," murmured Mr. Gumblay a day or two later, "you are rather a young goddess. I wonder you're not married by now. If you satisfied my sensitive and fastidious youth, how much more must you appeal to the ordinary male man? Why are you still single, *mon cœur?*"

He lay comfortably upon a stretch of sunlit sand and considered her. Out in a little bay opposite floated Leslie's dinghy which had brought them, restrained by a very long mooring attached to a very small anchor jammed in the beach. They had come to shore partly by clambering over rocks, partly by wading, Mr. Gumblay carrying the picnic-basket, Leslie the anchor. Even now her bare legs and feet glittered in the sunshine.

"I hate men," she said thoughtfully. "They always end by wanting to paw and kiss one. How would you like to be pawed and kissed by a girl simply because she said you were the loveliest man in the world? No, Cyprian, men are atrocious. I tolerate you at the moment because you're behaving tolerably. You've got enough sense to know when you're well off, and not try for things you can't have."

"'Oh, do not despise the advice of the wise,
Learn wisdom from them that are older,
And don't try for things that are out of your reach!'
And that's what the girl told the soldier,"

quoted Mr. Gumblay, throwing her an after-luncheon chocolate. "But, Leslie, you were less rigid in the old days. I kissed you several times when you were fifteen and had the most ripping legs."

"That was different. Then it was an adventure to be kissed, and I dare say for you to kiss me. I used to gasp with lovely agony then. Now I should be bored. You see, when one is young, Cyprian, and does a thing for the first time, there's a difference."

"Yes," said Mr. Gumblay a little absently. He was studying at long range an heraldic design on Leslie's gold cigarette-case; it seemed to be a mailed fist grasping a sword, with some motto beneath it which he could not read. "What's that motto on your cigarette-case, Leslie?"

She put it away hastily.

"Father gave it me—that's his trade-mark. It's got '*tenax et audax*' under it, because, he says, a bit of Latin looks well. Positively beastly, I call it."

"How simple the apparently complicated is to explain! I suggest that I boil the kettle for tea while you look on and do nothing, because you are a lady."

Soon Leslie was pouring the amber drink into the kind of cups always found in picnic baskets. She handed his share to Mr. Gumblay, and laughed at him with cruel frankness.

"Go on, Cyprian! Re-hash the sentimentality of our salad days. Tell me my lips are like rubies. Proceed!"

"I wish you wouldn't be so grown-up,

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**"Am I a nice flapper, Cyprian?" she whispered. . . . For answer, Mr. Gumblay tilted the ripe-corn head into the crook of his left elbow, and kissed Leslie's red mouth long and passionately.**

Leslie. Here am I in very damp and shapeless white flannels and a sweater, and my hair all rumpled, and there you sit with Bond Street written all over you. If only you dared let down your hair and be just a flapper again. This is *our* beach, Leslie. Do you remember?"

There must have been something very appealing in Mr. Gumblay's voice, for Leslie, after hesitating a moment, shrugged her shoulders, took off a devastating little cerise hat, and slowly, very slowly, let down her ripe-corn tresses. Dreamily she plaited them into a big plait, and held the end thoughtfully for a moment.

"It wants—kindly look away a moment," she commanded.

Mr. Gumblay obeyed, and when he was allowed to look again, a bow of ribbon confined the tail end of the plait. Leslie considered him with a touch of hardness in her gaze.

"I s'pose I'd better be a naughty flapper—they're more stimulating," she observed, and lit a cigarette. Then from the patch pocket of her skirt she produced a little vanity case and added a touch of red to her mouth and a thought of powder to her cheeks. She glanced up through her eyelashes at Mr. Gumblay, who watched her a trifle sadly.

"You are quite the Leslie I fell in love with, but the cigarette and the make-up are new," was his only comment. "May I take these things away?"

He picked up her unresisting hand, removed the powder puff, replaced it, and slipped the vanity case into her pocket. He did not relinquish her hand.

"Am I a nice flapper, Cyprian?" she whispered, veiling the grey eyes with her long lashes. "Am I the nicest flapper you ever, ever knew? Is your heart thumping like it used to—how long ago is it? Eight years?"

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For answer, Mr. Gumblay tilted the ripe-corn head into the crook of his left elbow, and kissed Leslie's red mouth long and passionately. For a moment she lay passive in his arms, not breathing, her eyes closed, then she broke away, pillowed her head in her arms, and sobbed as if heartbroken.

Mr. Gumblay shrugged his shoulders ever so faintly. The gesture suggested the mute despair of a blameless man, who has done his best, and seen only evil come out of good. He stroked the bowed head very tenderly, and waited. Presently she sat up and gave herself a little shake.

"It's no good, Cyprian dear," she choked. "One should never be kissed. A kiss is a sort of re-agent; it analyses a man's feelings towards one. Eight years ago you kissed me as if I were—oh! miles above this world; you barely dared touch me. Now it's a sort of wolf and lamb business—not exactly, but something like it. You frighten me. I don't think it's a matter of putting up or putting down hair. I think we've put on the clock too far. Oh, Cyprian, why can't we be just kids again?"

"In other words—

> 'Love's wings are ever fleet
> And like the panther's feet
> The feet of love.'"

quoted Mr. Gumblay. "Leslie, I've been and spoilt your nice picnic. I didn't mean to. So sorry!"

He lifted her to her feet, and for a moment his lips rested gently on her bent head. Then he began to collect the tea equipment, and help her over the rocks to water deep enough for the dinghy. He hauled in the little craft, handed Leslie into the stern, and hoisted the sail. Smoothly and silently they began to glide through the twilight back to Poldreath.

No one spoke a word. Somehow, the unhappy kiss seemed to have created a different Leslie. She sat very silent by Mr. Gumblay, her head resting against his sleeve. At last her right hand crept into his left and stayed there. In that light breeze one hand sufficed to hold the sheet and steer.

"It's such a big world, Cyprian, and I feel so little," she murmured at last. "I wish I could love like other girls, but I can't, can I? I didn't mean to be cross, and you're awfully nice to me. Don't be sorry or anything."

Mr. Gumblay only squeezed the hand in his.

"I've got to run up to Town to-morrow for a couple of days," he announced when he had seen her safely in the garden of Triton. "This is Wednesday. May I dine with you on Saturday? I rather want to, Leslie, please."

She nodded.

"All right, and I'll get something very nice for dinner. Good night, Cyprian, and thank you for my pretty day."

"You have, I hope, completed those confidential inquiries of which I spoke?" queried Mr. Gumblay, addressing Lucas on his return to "The Golden Prospect."

"Yes, sir," replied Lucas in the smooth accents of the well-trained servant. "In neither of the authoritative works of reference on the subject, 'The Furnishing Ironmongers' Year Book,' nor 'The Refreshment Caterers' and Licensed Victuallers' Annual,' nor yet in the 'Dictionary of Twentieth Century Cooking and Household Appliances' is there any mention either of 'Tubb's Mighty Mangles' or the Stokes' Fried Fish and Chips apparatus!"

"Ah!" commented Mr. Gumblay, "I thought as much. And, Lucas, I want the car at six a.m. to-morrow and breakfast at five-thirty. I am running up to Town."

## IV.

On the Saturday evening after her picnic Leslie sat waiting for Mr. Gumblay. Once she picked up a letter from the mantelpiece, and read it with a faint smile playing about her mouth. Then she put it away, shrugged the whitest shoulders in the world that rose out of a misty pink evening gown like Venus rising from the sea, and fidgeted with a row of pearls at her throat. At last a step in the hall announced her guest. The panting lady opened her drawing-room door, and the tall, slender figure of Mr. Gumblay entered, but not the Mr. Gumblay of old. This was a person in khaki service dress, with the badges of a captain, the scarlet tabs of a Staff officer, and quite a display of ribbons. Leslie stood in silent amazement. The apparition held out a cheery hand.

"What a change in our well-known friend!" he observed genially, *apropos* of his appearance. "It has been a busy two days, Leslie dear. I have at length wangled a medical board. They'll only have me for a Staff job, so, knowing a few people, a Staff job I have pinched. After all, I am quite intelligent. Hence these gaudy scarlet trimmings. You look very beautiful, Leslie. Have you missed me, *tres chère?*"

Leslie turned away, and leant one white arm upon the mantelpiece.

"Why did you tell me that tale about being ruined?" she asked coldly. "I've had a letter about it. I wrote and inquired of some people I know. You are no more ruined than I am! I mean——"

"Precisely! Than you are the child of a fish cooker proprietor about to wed mangles. You are Leslie, daughter of Sir John Stokes,

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Leslie stood, in silent amazement. The apparition held out a cheery hand. "What a change in our well-known friend!" he observed genially, *apropos* of his appearance. . . . "They'll only have me for a Staff job, so, knowing a few people, a Staff job I have pinched."

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of Stokes Kirby, in the county of Cumberland. I wove the little fiction as a sort of counterblast to yours. Your cigarette-case betrayed you. A nice pair, aren't we? I had the curiosity to hunt up your crest. *Voila!* Why did you deceive me, Leslie? There doesn't seem much point to it."

"A girl has to keep her end up somehow. I wanted to see what you'd do. This place belongs to father, and I'd just slipped away for a rest, with only a fisherman's wife to look after me. Then you came, and I could see the hunting gleam in your eye, so I thought I'd put you off with an impossible parent in case I should need to get rid of you in the long run. Self-defence is a girl's first interest where men are concerned. Well, what happens to you now?"

"France on Monday week. I have a little experience of that Front. What was I to do, Leslie? One must either love or fight, and you won't let me love you. We thrashed that out together the other day on our beach. I shall never care for anyone else. I stick to my first impressions. You said I was like a wolf in sheep's clothing. Well, now I have adapted my clothing to my disposition. Haven't I done right?"

"You've done what you pleased, as men always can. And I haven't. I'm a little fool, I s'pose. I——"

The tears began to run down Leslie's face. She crumpled a tiny scrap of a handkerchief fiercely in her hand, and then faced him.

"I *do* love you," she said defiantly. "I knew it when you kissed me, only I was frightened. I tried to tell you going back in the dinghy, but I couldn't. And so I've got to humble myself and tell you now, because you're too proud to ask me again, and if you go to France you mayn't come back."

Mr. Gumblay said nothing, but his blue eyes, looking at her, held a sort of fiotous heaven of happiness. Oblivious of a Sam Browne belt, brass buttons, and other uncomfortable things, he gathered her to his heart, as if he would never let her go.

"Leslie, Leslie, I am so happy!" he kept saying. "You and back to the Army all on one day! Leslie, you are such a dear thing—the dearest, littlest thing. For nine years I've never stopped thinking of you. Oh, I *am* happy!"

Leslie raised her head, and the most charming smile in the universe flashed through her tears.

"Come and have dinner and drink to us, my dear," she said.

V.

On the ensuing Monday Mr. Gumblay stood with Leslie in his Half Moon Street smoking-room. She had just finished wandering all over his domain. Now a sudden thought occurred to him. He pressed the electric bell, and there entered Lucas.

Mr. Gumblay indicated the last shell-case dramatically.

"Take this and have it made into a claret-jug at once," he commanded. "It must be ready by Thursday. I am to be married on Thursday."

Lucas received the trophy with care.

"I should like, if I may do so respectfully, to congratulate you, Mr. Cyprian, sir, not so much on account of the joyful nature of the event, as because I realise your health must now be completely restored, or otherwise you would never venture. 'Aving served the family from boy to man, your 'ealth is a matter of the deepest concern to me, Mr. Cyprian, sir. This is indeed an 'appy day."

## ROSES AND HONEYSUCKLE.

I remember, oh! so clearly, how the roses used to grow
On a little, red-roofed cottage in the dear, old long ago—
Roses peeping in the windows, roses climbing up the wall;
But the honeysuckle round the porch was sweeter than them all.

Though that little, red-roofed cottage is a thousand miles away,
I can shut my eyes and see again, as though 'twere yesterday,
The roses all a-blowing, pink and yellow, white and red.
And the honeysuckle growing round the porch above my head.

For 'twas in that porch that someone whispered something soft and low
In my ear, one summer evening, in the dear, old long ago;
Which is why, in spite of all the roses climbing up the wall,
The honeysuckle is, to me, the sweetest flower of all.

Ada Leonora Harris.

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# THE OCTOBER CAP & BELLS

### MAKING A JOB OF IT.

"Here's a penny for you, my man," she said to the frayed and ragged-looking individual who stood under the porch with extended hand. "I'm not giving it to you for charity's sake, but merely because it pleases me."

"Thankee, but couldn't you make it sixpence, and enjoy yourself thoroughly, ma'am?"

### NOT SO POWERFUL.

"What are you, anyway," contemptuously inquired Mrs. Peck during the quarrel, "a man or a mouse?"

"A man," answered Henry Peck bitterly. "If I were a mouse I'd have you up on that table by now, yelling for help."

### SPREADING THE TIDINGS.

"Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives."

"Possibly," answered Miss Caustic, "but that isn't the fault of the ladies who get together with their knitting on the verandah at our hotel."

### SLIPPING HIS COLLAR.

KIND LADY (at children's party): "Well, my little man, and what are you going to be when you grow up?"

THE LITTLE MAN (tugging at uncomfortable neckwear): "Somefin' what don't wear a collar."

### MEMORIES.

**Do you remember, love, those happy days**
**When you and I took rides in trains ablaze**
**With light? Days ere the porter's "Blinds down, please!"**
**Was wafted gently on the evening breeze?**

**Have you forgotten, dear, those glad old times,**
**Before the law rose up and stilled the chimes**
**Of Ben at Westminster? The golden days wh n we,**
**Lightheartedly, took sugar with our tea?**

**Do we not sigh, my loved one, you and I,**
**For times of peace, when we, *en route* to buy**
**Potatoes, sought not the local p'liceman's aid**
**Ere we dare face the merchant unafraid?**

**But come, sweet girl, away with melancholy!**
**We'll sup. and toast (in coffee) mirth and folly!**
**Forgot shall be this gloom, forgot—but hark 'ee!—**
**'Tis ten o'clock—I cannot sup in khaki!**

**Mabel Dean.**

### CAUSE AND EFFECT?

In a certain parish in the North of England the following notice was posted on the church gates:

"A church supper will be held on Saturday evening On Sunday an address will be given by the Vicar. Subject, 'A Night of Agony.'"

***WAITER: "How would you like your eggs done, sir?"***

***SCOTCHMAN: "Any difference in the price?"***

***WAIT R: "No, sir."***

***SCOTCHMAN: "Then I'll have them done with a rasher of bacon."***

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### SAVING HIS FACE.

THE DRILL SERGEANT (after worrying the recruit for two hours): "Right about face!"

RECRUIT (perfectly immovable): "Thank goodness, I'm right about something at last."

### AWAKENED MEMORIES.

"What's the matter, Mr. Crabbe?" asked the manageress of the boarding-house. "By the way you sip your soup and stare up at the ceiling in that far-away manner one would think it reminded you of something."

"Yes," replied the lodger reflectively, "it reminds me faintly of soup."

### THE CUT DIRECT.

Four-year-old Barbara went to church with her two sisters, and came home crying.

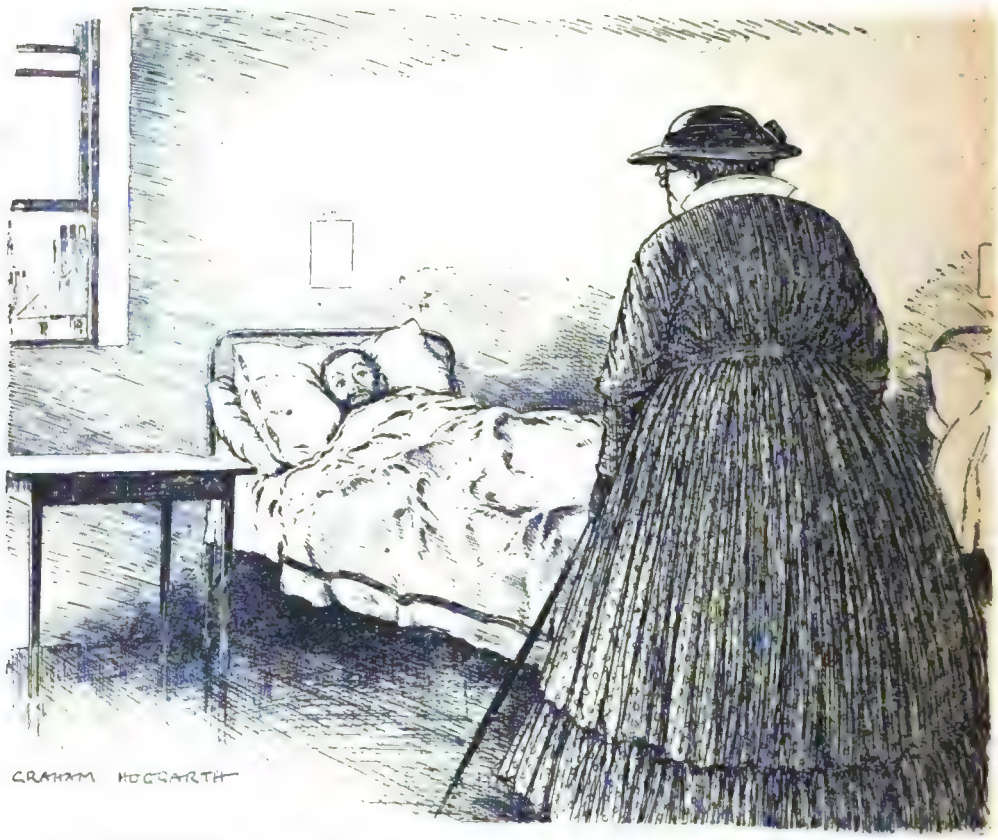
"What is the matter, dear?" inquired her mother.

"He preached a whole s—sermon—about—M—Mary and Martha," sobbed Barbara, "and—never said a word—about me!"

### AS SHE SAW IT.

TED (displaying his new motor): "This controls the brake. It is put on very quickly in case of an emergency."

FIANCÉE: "I see, something like a kimono."




***GUSHING VISITOR: "Oh, my poor man, how bad you look! What is the matter with you?"***
***BORED TOMMY: "Caught my death of cold drinking out of a damp glass, mum."***

### THE RETORT COURTEOUS.

During the stoppage of the traffic in a busy thoroughfare a 'bus-driver, ever on the look-out for a chance of displaying his wit, espied a group of Italians employed in laying the asphalt roadway. Calling the attention of one of the Italians, the 'bus-driver yelled: "Hi! where's yer monkey?"

Short and sharp came back the reply: "Driving a 'bus!"

### THE RESULT.

MAGISTRATE: "What! Do you mean to say this man struck you, and he a physical wreck?"

MRS. MALONEY: "Yes, yer honour; but he's only been a fizzikle wreck since he struck me."

### CAUGHT!

"Hubby, you know that letter I said I gave you to post?"

"Yes, my dear. I assure you I posted it."

"No, you didn't. I didn't give it to you. I thought I gave it to you, but I gave it to father."

### NO SELECTION.

"You are double-faced!" cried the excited man in the third row from the platform.

The speaker paused and looked at him gravely.

"Ah, well," he said reflectively at last. "It is easy to see that the gentleman who has just interrupted me is not double-faced, or he certainly wouldn't have come with the one he has to-night!"

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# A RUDE AWAKENING.

THE EARLY MORNING ACTIVITIES OF AN IRREPRESSIBLE INFANT.

*1. "Wake up, Daddy! Let's play at animals——*

*2. ——and you be a lion, and growl very loud."*

*3. "Let's pretend you're a bear, Daddy——*

*4. ——or a hippo like the one at the Zoo——*

*5. ——or let's both be kangaroos——*

*6. ——or something like that."*

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### NOT A NON-STOP.

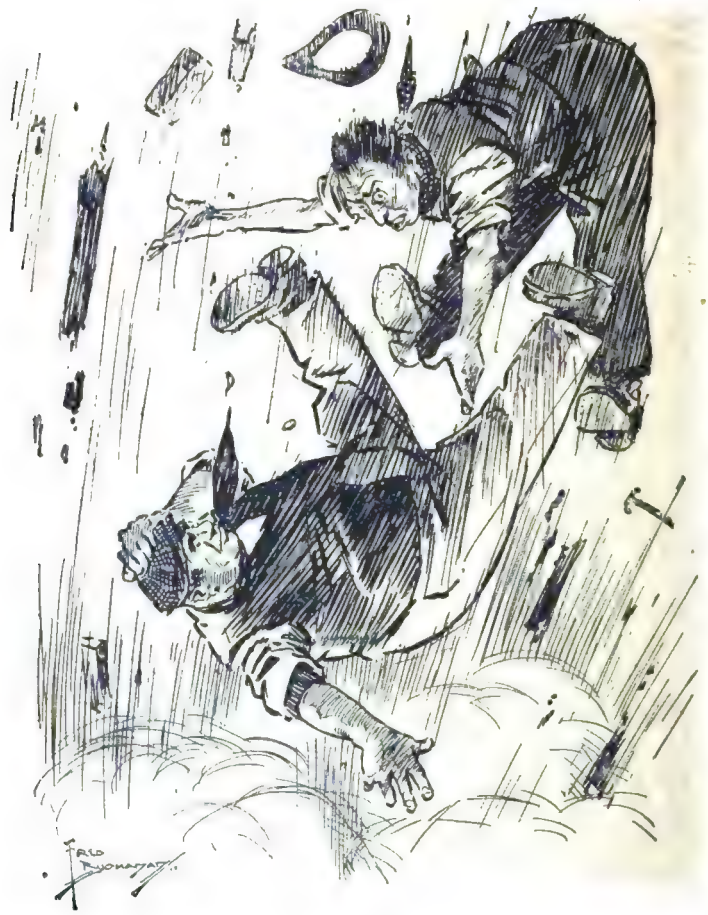
OLD LADY (anxiously): "Does this train stop at London?"

GUARD: "Well, if it don't, madam, you will see the durnedest smash up you ever did see."

### TAKING PRECAUTIONS.

DENTIST (to patient who is opening his purse): "No, don't bother to pay me in advance."

PATIENT: "I'm not. I was only counting my money before you give me gas."



*MUNITION WORKER (as the factory blows up): "Yus, I made over five quid in wages last week, an' I could 'ave done it again if it 'adn't been for this 'ere bloomin' waste of time."*

### OUT FOR REVENGE.

With pathetic tears on her baby cheeks, little Ethel ran up to the big, stalwart policeman.

"P-p-please, sir," she sobbed, "will you come and lock a bad man up?"

"What's he been doing?" asked the man in blue gently.

"Oo-boo-boo," wailed Ethel, "he's b-b-broken up my hoop wif 'is nasty bicycle."

"Has he?" replied the policeman angrily, as he saw her tears flow afresh. "Where is he?"

"Oh, you'll easily catch 'im," said Ethel, drying her tears. "They've just carried 'im into that chemist's shop on a shutter!"

### GIVING HIM A LIFT.

Just one week had elapsed since Tom had landed in America. Returning to his rooms rather late one night, he came upon a man sitting on a doorstep, evidently joyfully oblivious to the cares of this world.

"Been dining?" asked Tom.

"Yes."

"D'you live here? Want to get inside?"

"Yes."

Seeing no wife or light about, Tom helped the fellow upstairs, and pushed him into the first doorway that he came to.

As he groped his way out of the house, he came upon another figure, evidently in a limper state than the one he had just helped.

"You been dining, too?" he queried.

"Yes," came the feeble reply.

The good-natured fellow thought he could not do less than assist this woe-begone traveller upstairs also. As he reached the street for the second time he saw a man evidently in a worse state than either of the former couple he had met. As he approached, however, the man fled to a passing policeman.

"Constable," he gasped, "I demand p'tection from this man. He's carried me upstairs twice and thrown me down the lift-shaft!"

### RAISING THE VEIL OF HER FUTURE.

The cook had left, and no other could be obtained, so the lady of the house did the cooking herself with such satisfactory results that after a month her husband gave her a beautiful set of sables as a token of his appreciation of the good dinners he had enjoyed.

Of course the neighbours soon heard of this, and when the cook left in another equally well-known family, the lady of that house said to her husband:

"Well, the cook has gone, and I'm not going to bother to get another. I am going to do the cooking myself. You heard what Mr. Bradley gave his wife when she did the cooking."

And, putting her arms round his neck, she cooed: "What shall I get for my cooking?"

"My dear," said her husband, pushing her away, "you will probably get a long, black veil."

### UNNECESSARY WARNING.

"This seems to be a very dangerous precipice," remarked the tourist. "I wonder that they have not put up a warning-board!"

"Yes," answered the guide, "it is dangerous. They kept a warning-board up for two years, but no one fell over, so it was taken down."

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## SUNDAYS ONLY.

The little minister while walking down the lane one foggy night fell into a deep hole. He shouted for help, and after some time a burly labourer heard his cries and approached.

"Who are ye?" he asked.

"I'm the minister," was the agitated reply. "Help me out quickly, my good man."

"Weel, weel, ye needna mak' sic a fuss," answered the other slowly. "This is only Wednesday, and ye'll no be wanted before the Sawbath."

## HOME-MADE.

"My wife made me what I am!"

"Have you forgiven her yet?"

## THE SCEPTIC CONVINCED.

Two Irish soldiers on their way to France passed through London recently. It was their first experience of the "big village," and they were naturally keeping their eyes open.

Their watchfulness was, however, not sharp enough to avoid a taxi in the vicinity of Victoria Station, and one of them got knocked over.

As he picked himself up—none the worse for his fall—his mate growled: "Mebbe you'll believe it's busier than Carrickdoyle now."

*Nurse says black cats are lucky,*
*I do so hope it's true,*
*Because to-day's my birthday,*
*And Auntie's brought me two.*

## OUT OF HIS DEPTH.

At considerable expense the Puddlecombe Town Council had erected some public baths, and not long ago they were opened by one of the leading men of the neighbourhood.

One of the proudest men there was Sandy, who had been appointed bath superintendent. Sandy had two hobbies—dog-breeding and swimming.

Just prior to the opening ceremony one of the local councillors slipped and fell into the six-foot end of the bath.

"Come out o' that!" roared Sandy, leaning over and catching the unfortunate one by his hair. "Come out o' that! The bath's no' opened yet!"

When dragged out the councillor tried to laugh the matter off by remarking: "Anyhow, I have had the first swim."

He was denied even this satisfaction.

"'Deed ye havena'!" said Sandy calmly. "Me an' the dogs had a dip this morning."

## A NEW GOLF TERM.

An Irishman was suddenly struck by a golf-ball.

"Are you hurt?" asked the player. "Why didn't you get out of the way?"

"An' why should I get out of the way?" asked Pat. "I didn't know there was any assassins round here."

"But I called 'fore,'" said the player, "and when I say 'fore' that is a sign for you to get out of the way."

"Oh, it is, Is it?" said Pat. "Well, thin, whin I say 'foive,' it is a sign that you are going to get hit on the nose. 'Foive!'"

*GERALD: "Dad, do you think our flying men will ever reach Heaven by aeroplane?"*
*DAD: "Not intentionally, my boy."*



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# POOR DR. DOWNEY

By T. O'Meara.

*"There is no music more for him,*
*His lights are out, his feast is done."*

"Ah, the poor docther!" said Mr. Mulligan.

Mr. Mulligan was digging up his potato patch. At least, he would have said (if you had asked him) that that was what he was doing. Otherwise you might have supposed him to be leaning easily on a low stone wall in the sunshine, smoking his pipe, and very ready for a gossip with any acquaintance who happened to pass by.

"Dr. Downey, do you mean?" I inquired.

"Who else, indeed?" said Mr. Mulligan. "Sure, t'will be a terrible blow for him when he comes back from the wars!"

"What, has Dr. Downey enlisted? I thought—I imagined that he must be——"

"Too old? He is that, ma'am, and bald beside. But, you'll remember, there was a piece in the paper, a while back, to say how every docther, young or old, was wanted to go and help with the Roll-Along-My-Corpses."

"With the—oh, the R.A.M.C., I suppose you mean?"

"I do, ma'am; 'twas my son that's in Egypt told me what the letters stand for. And the poor docther that's been here twenty years, he has—dear, dear, 'tis only a fortnight since he went, too! The poor docther!"

"Why, whatever has happened to him, Mr. Mulligan? Has he been wounded? What is it?"

"No, no, ma'am. 'Tis at a camp in the South he is; and will be, they say, till the end of the war. But it's his patients, ma'am; and after all the trouble he's been at with them, too!

"You see, ma'am, Dr. Downey's practice, 'twas not among the common people, like you and I, saving your presence, ma'am. 'Twas the gentry for Dr. Downey, since first he came to the town; a wonderful manner he had with them, indeed! My wife that used to be in service at the Towers—many a time she's seen him there, with her ladyship and her ladyship's sisters; sure, he'd come into the room, stepping so soft and dainty, like—like that hen there, ma'am; and making much the same little noise—croo, croo! 'And how *are* we to-day, then? How *are* we?' Croo, croo! 'Yes, yes; a little better? A little stronger? *That's* right! Yes, yes!' And then he'd sit down, soft as soft, he would, on the chair by the bedside, and take her ladyship's hand and pat it as light as a feather; and there he'd sit, making his little 'croo, croo' noise, and saying 'Yes, yes,' for an hour by the clock, he would indeed! And

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"He'd come into the room, stepping so soft and dainty . . . 'And how *are* we to-day, then? How *are* we?'"

the same with her ladyship's sisters; and the same with the vicar's wife; and with old Mr. Dryden that should be in his grave a dozen years since, if honest people had their rights; to think of the will he's made and no one able to touch a penny the time he's above ground, sure 'tis an aggravation!

"And all of them that fond of the poor docther; and the two ladies at the Cross Houses—every day for five years, he's been there; and up in the night often twice a week for Miss Janet's spasms; two guineas every time, so you may guess, ma'am! And now to think of what's happened, dear, ah dear!"

"But what has happened, Mr. Mulligan? Are they all dead?"

"Dead, ma'am? Devil a one! 'Tis worse than that, indeed! The poor dochter! You see, they couldn't bring themselves to the thought of the young man he left to do his work; and faith, 'tis not surprising, for the docther did his best to get a one they'd like—but 'tis not easy at the present time, and as her ladyship at the Towers said, she never had had a black man in her bedroom, and she never would. Not that I am that particular myself, ma'am; my wife had him here last week for the measles, and, sure, the children thought it was a circus, and nobody could be more attentive. But the gentry that's used to Dr. Downey, you see . . . Well, there it is, ma'am!

"So after the third day her ladyship at the Towers got tired of lying in bed all day with nobody to sit and pat her hand, and she sat up and made a respirator, m'am; she did, indeed; and next day she made two respirators, and presently, ma'am, if you believe me, she came walking along the village street in all her clothes to buy cotton elastic at the shop! And 'twas only yesterday I met her on the hill with her dogs; and 'Hello, Mr. Mulligan!' she says, 'I've been for a five-mile tramp—lovely day, isn't it?'—ah, the poor docther!

"And her ladyship's sister, she's got a motor-cycle and offered herself to carry dispatches!

"And the ladies at the Cross Houses have gone ploughing for Mr. Jenkinson at the big farm, the way his lads can go off to join the Army.

"And old Mr. Dryden drilling every evening with the Training League as if he was no older than yourself, ma'am!

"And the vicar's wife cutting out flannel shirts till, if it was myself, my back would break in two, ma'am, it would so!

"And will Dr. Downey ever be able to get them back into bed again, ma'am, I ask you? Sure, 'tis in the workhouse he will be, after all!

"Ah, the poor docther!"

"They couldn't bring themselves to the thought of the young man he left to do his work; and faith, 'tis not surprising."

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# A Fool at the Game

By Keble Howard.

*"Who in his pocket hath no money,*
*In his mouth he must have honey."*

I.

"Same old story," said Noel. "Drawn blank."

"Not really?" For Ursula could never quite believe that any business firm in the world would decline to avail itself of the services of a young man so distinguished-looking or so well dressed as Noel.

"Actually! Amazing, isn't it?" And he laughed, a little bitterly.

"I call it disgraceful!" exclaimed Ursula, who was desperately in love, and naturally wanted to be married. "Did you tell them you'd been invalided out of the Army?"

"Certainly. I had to explain why I wasn't fighting."

"And didn't that move them?"

"It moved them to the extent of offering to teach me the ropes if I liked to put down five hundred of the best. When I pointed out that the poor old guv'nor had rather muddled his affairs, and quitted this weary world a bit on the wrong side of the ledger, they pressed the button, and the office-boy came to fetch me with the lift."

Ursula clenched her little fists, and her eyes flashed.

"I wish I'd been there! I'd have told them something! You go out to France and fight while they sit at home and make money, and then they demand five hundred pounds to teach you their silly business! Beasts!"

Noel laughed again, but this time he was really amused.

"My dear old thing, a business firm isn't a charitable institution! Why on earth should they take an absolute rotter——"

"I won't have you call yourself that! You know perfectly well you're a hero!"

"From their point of view, hero or no hero, I'm simply a rotter. Oh, they were very nice, you understand, and frightfully cut up, and said they were proud to know me—but they clearly didn't see me as a business asset. And they were dead right. What can I do, after all? I can play cricket a bit, and footer a bit, and lawn-tennis a bit. I can sing a bit, and wear clothes a bit, and smoke cigarettes a bit. I've got what people will persist in calling the 'Oxford manner'—a pure superstition—and I can spell decently, and read the evening paper. Soldiering suited me down to the ground, but that's all over. I never saved a penny in my life, and nobody that I know of is likely to give me or leave me any. So there we are, old thing, and the sooner you break off our engagement, and get fixed up with a prosperous munitioner or something of that sort the better for you."

"And what about you?"

"Oh, I'll get a job in a school, teaching little boys to drill."

"Don't be ridiculous, Noel! You'll do nothing of the sort, and I shall do nothing of the sort. You've got plenty of brains if you like to use them, and these men in business who make such a lot of money are mostly bluffers. They begin bluffing, and they make fortunes bluffing, and they die bluffing. I know what I'm talking about. This war has taught me a lot. Well, *you* must bluff."

"Haven't the least idea how to start."

"Then you must find out. We're up against it, old boy. I've no intention of being a spinster all my life, and I shall never marry anyone but you. So think!"

Noel lit a cigarette, and stared vacantly out of the window. Ursula, seeking inspiration where it was more likely to be found, stared at Noel.

"I've got it!" she cried at last.

"Splendid!"

"You must sell motor-cars."

"My dear—my very dear old girl!"

"Well, why not?"

"In the first place, I haven't got any to sell."

"I know that, idiot mine. You must sell other people's. You're tall, and well dressed,

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and quite decent-looking, and you have the persuasive manner. You know all about cars. Yes, you must sell motor-cars. That's the way to make money."

"I don't mind what I do—barring things that a gentleman wouldn't do. But who would trust me to sell cars for them? They'd want a thousand pounds to teach me how to sell 'em!"

"That's absurd, of course. You must find the right people, and then gain their confidence. You'd be an asset in any shop. All the women will want to buy cars from you, and I shall probably tear their eyes out. But we must risk that. The thing now is to hit on a way of bluffing some good firm into giving you a trial."

"I might get some of our chaps to write me letters asking about cars."

"I'm afraid," observed Ursula, "your brain is not working too well. Go round to the club, have some dinner, play billiards till ten, and then go to bed. Call for me at one o'clock to-morrow, and I'll tell you the result of my night's thinking."

**They lunched in a wee corner of a wee restaurant, and she talked from the sardines to the coffee.**

"Oh, but I can't have you worrying yourself like that, old girl!"

"Don't let that get on your nerves. It's my show just as much as yours. I'll scheme and you bluff, and we'll soon get the better of this grandmotherly old town!"

And the next day, sure enough, Ursula had a plan. They lunched in a wee corner of a wee restaurant, and she talked from the sardines to the coffee. By that time Noel had grasped the notion from all angles. He was good at executive, as his superiors had discovered. Initiative and executive do not always go hand in hand.

In this case, however, they left the little restaurant arm-in-arm. Initiative was full of eagerness and happy smiles, whilst Executive wore a look of terrific determination.

II.

Mr. Nettlefold, of Nettlefold, Stapleford, and Co., pursed his lips and shook his head.

"My dear Mr. Sykes," he said, "nobody would be more delighted than myself to give you a job in this office. I know what we owe to brave lads like you. I do, and always shall, give an ex-soldier the preference when other things are equal. But this firm has to fight for its living just the same as any other firm. Our business is difficult and peculiar. We deal, of course, in new cars, but we also deal, very largely, in second-hand cars. Now there is a special art in selling a second-hand car. People who come here to buy second-hand cars are sometimes simpletons, but just as often they are up to every trick in the game. If we didn't keep our eyes skinned from the time we open to the time we shut, they'd do us nine times out of ten. We have to be smart. We are smart, consequently, and we know it."

"If——" began Noel.

"Yes, Mr. Sykes, I know perfectly well what you're thinking and what you would like to say. You tell me you can drive a car—have handled all sorts of cars both in England and in France. But let me tell you this, sir. It isn't drivers we want. Drivers we can get at any time. What we want are salesmen—chaps who can make a customer buy when he doesn't know himself whether he wants to buy or not. Now, Mr. Sykes, you don't strike me, frankly, as being that kind of man. If I may say so, quite without offence, you're too much of a gentleman for our trade."

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"Look here," Noel burst in. "Give me a car to sell. Put your reserve price on it. Pick out the rottenest thing in the shop. If I sell it, I take twenty per cent. of your commission. If I don't, I'll clear out and try my luck elsewhere."

Mr. Nettlefold smiled. "You've got pluck," he remarked.

"Thank you. Is it a deal?"

The manager ran his eye over the assortment of cars awaiting purchasers. They were of all varieties, but the small and shabby sort predominated. At last he threaded his way through the miscellany, and laid a hand on a very timeworn two-seater.

"This," said Mr. Nettlefold, "is a Fenn-Scales. D'ye know 'em?"

"I've driven one," replied Noel.

"They're not bad little cars when you get a good one. This particular specimen came in about a week ago. It's been pretty roughly handled, but the engine looks all right."

"Any reserve on her?"

"No. But I wouldn't let her go under seventy-five."

"I call that cheap."

"Do you, Mr. Sykes? Then I'll make you a fair and square offer. You sell that little Fenn-Scales for seventy-five or anything over, and I'll give you twenty per cent. of our commission, which is ten. Not only that, I'll take you on for six months on the same terms, and I'll pay you five pounds a week to keep you going. Is it good enough?"

"It is," replied Noel. "But how long do I have to sell her in?"

"Say a week. Just hang about the place, and you shall have the first cut at anyone who asks for a two-seater at a low price. Bless your heart, you won't have long to wait. They come in all day long these times."

So the matter was settled, and Noel found himself installed as a salesman—temporarily — under the roof of Messrs. Nettlefold, Stapleford, & Co. He felt a little awkward and rather shy, but he thought of Ursula, and braced himself to appear nonchalant and at home.

As soon as Mr. Nettlefold had left the building, Noel turned his attention to the little Fenn-Scales. He had the tank filled up with the best petrol, and let the engine run gently. He opened up the gear-box, and packed it carefully with a mixture of oil and grease. He himself unscrewed all the greasers and packed them. He gave the engine just the oil she required. He adjusted the needle of the carburettor to allow a generous flow of petrol.

With the engine still running, he took a rag and some polishing stuff and touched up all the brass. The paintwork was hopeless, but he even had a go at that. Finally, he cleaned the wind-screen and rubbed over what was left of the leather.

She was getting nicely warmed, but he raced the engine for a minute or two, and then prayed for a customer.

The afternoon wore on. He needed his lunch, but would not leave the shop in case an angel turned in who wanted a car for seventy-five pounds. And sure enough, about three o'clock, an elderly gentleman with a top-hat and an umbrella was delivered into Noel's hands.

"Good-afternoon, sir," said Noel. "What can I have the pleasure of showing you?"

"Well—er—I should like to see one or two of your second-hand two-seaters."

"Certainly, sir. About what price would you wish to pay?"

"Oh, I want something very cheap—very cheap indeed. She must be a good hill-climber, because I live in a hilly district. I've just sold my own car—it was too big for these times. The petrol consumption was enormous."

"I quite understand, sir. You would like to pay about two hundred or two-fifty, perhaps?"

"Oh, no, no! Nothing of that sort! You see, I merely want a little thing that I can potter about in. I'm a doctor, but I live in the country, and it really doesn't matter whether——"

"Quite so. Will you step this way, sir?" Noel led him to the Fenn-Scales.

The elderly gentleman frowned. "I can't say I like the look of that one," he observed.

"No, she wouldn't take a prize in a beauty show," Noel admitted. "But you don't particularly wish to cut a dash, I take it?"

"Oh, dear, no! At the same time——"

"In fact, if you can get a little car dirt cheap, which will take you up any hill in reason, and cover the ground at anything between twenty-five and thirty miles an hour, and is light on tyres, and consumes not more than a gallon to the thirty miles, you'd be satisfied, eh?"

"I should," said the old gentleman. "That's just the car I'm after. But what would you call dirt cheap?"

"If I may suggest, sir, we'll discuss that later—after our little run."

"Little run, eh? You want me to take a little run on that old thing?"

"I do, sir, and I think I may say you'll be surprised. I've driven a Fenn-Scales in

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France, and I know what they can do. George, my boy, just help me get this two-seater out, will you?"

The "little thing" was soon in the street, and the usual crowd of urchins and loafers assembled about her. Noel, quite unperturbed, lit a cigarette and buttoned his gloves. The old genteman took his seat, and away they went.

"First of all," said Noel, "I'll show you how she behaves in traffic."

"You'll—er—drive carefully, young man? My nerves are not all that I should wish, and some of you young soldiers——"

"You may make your mind quite easy," Noel assured him as they slipped between a huge lorry and a motor-'bus with at least half-an-inch to spare on either side. "That's one of the advantages of these little cars. Very handy in traffic."

To prove the truth of this statement, Noel dropped a hand negligently over the side, held up a Rolls-Royce, a three-horsed dray, and about a hundred taxis, and shot down a narrow street into the hurly-burly of Covent Garden. Here the Fenn-Scales executed a pretty two-step amongst the stalls and waggons, dived under the noses of a brewer's team, brushed the sleeve of an inspector near Bow Street Police Station, and capered down-hill into the Strand like a lamb on holiday.

"Seems to steer easily," observed the old gentleman.

"Steer her with an eyelash!" declared Noel, and he passed a motor-'bus on the near side with one finger on the wheel. The old gentleman said never a word. He was too busy watching the traffic ahead.

They wriggled down Fleet Street, cut into New Bridge Street, and were heading west along the Embankment as the City princes, well lunched, were returning to their offices to complete the heat and burden of the day by signing a few letters. All cars have their moods, and the Fenn-Scales, as luck would have it, was in a particularly sweet mood this afternoon. She swam up Northumberland Avenue, minced past the great shipping offices in Cockspur Street, took the Haymarket on top gear, and had the good fortune to make Regent Street without a hold-up. It was pretty plain sailing after that. The wooden pavements were as smooth as glass, and Noel knew exactly where to find them.

"You'd like to see what she can do on a hill, I expect, sir?"

"Well, it would certainly be more satisfactory. But there's no hill of any consequence in the neighbourhood, and I don't think I ought to——"

"That's all right, sir. It's my business. I know a little pitch that will give you a very good idea."

The "little pitch" Master Noel had in mind was Netherall Gardens. For the benefit of those who have never driven a car up Netherall Gardens, it may be mentioned that the gradient reminds you of the roof of a house and the "take-off" is a sheer matter of luck. If the road is clear at the bottom and you get a good run at the hill, big cars do it with ease, medium-powered cars gasp a little, and tiny cars fling themselves at the obstacle with a whoop, and generally—but by no means always—crawl over the parapet with the engine doing a million revolutions a second.

If, on the other hand, the road at the bottom is not clear the big cars go into their third speed, the medium-powered cars into their fourth, and the little cars go home or take an alternative route.

Neol hoped for the best. As they neared the turning he saw one of those dark, sinister-looking naval lorries approaching from the opposite direction The driver was a nice young

About three o'clock, an elderly gentleman with a top-hat and an umbrella was delivered into Noel's hands. . . . "I should like to see one or two of your second-hand two-seaters."

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gentleman in the uniform of the R.N.A.S. And he was not alone. Three other sportsmen, also in the uniform of the R.N.A.S., were smoking cigarettes and enjoying the drive. The pace of the lorry was nothing for the Navy—certainly not more than forty-five miles an hour.

Noel reflected. He reflected, as one must at a critical juncture, with extreme rapidity. He also measured the relative distances with the eye of experience. If neither he nor the lorry slackened speed it seemed to him that the two parties would see the end of the war at the foot of Netherall Gardens. For his part, he could not slacken speed if the little Fenn-Scales was to acquit herself with credit. And he rather thought he understood the temperament of the R.N.A.S. young gentlemen.

Noel flung out an imperious arm.

"I-tiddley-ighty!
Take me back to Blighty!"

sang the R.N.A.S. party, and they held steadily on their way.

"Surely——!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"It's all right," said Noel, shoving his spark forward and slightly adjusting his cigarette.

"But you can't intend to——!"

"I think I shall just have room."

The old gentleman said no more. He remembered, with miserable satisfaction, that his life insurance policy was fully paid up and his will in the safe custody of his lawyer. Noel's right hand was out. The naval lorry thundered on.

Suddenly the merry boys in blue realised that this impertinent idiot was in earnest. He did, it seemed, actually expect them, on the King's urgent business, to slacken speed for a rotten sardine-tin carrying Noah in a top-hat! Monstrous! Absurd! The interloper on the earth must perish!

The critical moment had almost arrived. The old gentleman held his umbrella in so fierce a grip that the handle snapped in two. Noel laughed. The R.N.A.S. young gentlemen yelled a warning. Round went the little Fenn-Scales, bang across the bows of the lorry! Pedestrians held their breath! A nursemaid shrieked! The R.N.A.S. driver jammed one foot on the clutch and the other on the foot-brake, whilst his right hand grabbed at the side-brake so eagerly that he missed it altogether.

"My road!" lied Noel, as he scraped clear with an eight of an inch to spare.

The impetus carried them nicely to the summit of Netherall Gardens. Without a word to his passenger, Noel turned about and made for home at a gentle glide.

"Care to handle her, sir?"

"Not just now, thanks."

"Then he means to handle her at some future date," thought Noel. And he mentally stiffened the price.

Mr. Nettlefold, returning to his place of business shortly after four, found Noel absent. An inexplicable look of anxiety passed over Mr. Nettlefold's face.

"George!" he called to the mechanic.

"Yes, sir?"

"Seen anything of Mr. Sykes lately—that new gentleman?"

"Went out about a hour ago, sir, in that there little old Fenn-Scales. 'Ad a 'ole gent in a top-'at with 'im."

"You've seen nothing of him since?"

"No, sir."

"Mr. Salkeld in?"

"In the office, sir. Should I 'phone up?"

"No, thanks. I'll go up. Let me know the moment Mr. Sykes returns."

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Nettlefold was in earnest conversation with his manager, Mr. Salkeld, when the house-telephone tinkled.

"Mr. Sykes 'as just come in, sir."

"Oh, ask him to step up here, will you?"

Noel, his hands in his pockets, sauntered into the office. Both men looked at him with a good deal of curiosity.

"Well, Mr. Sykes," began Nettlefold, "I hear you had a bite for that little two-seater?"

"Yes," said Noel.

"Do any good?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"Sold her?"

"Yes."

"Capital! Get my price?"

"And a little over."

"How much?"

"I took eighty."

"Cash, of course?"

"Of course."

"I congratulate you. If you'll just hand it over to Mr. Salkeld, he'll pay you twenty per cent. of eight pounds, which will be our commission, and I'll then draw up the contract for six months on the terms I named."

Noel opened his note-case and counted out six one-pound notes. He then drew from his pocket eight shillings in silver, and placed the total amount on Mr. Salkeld's desk.

Nettlefold and Salkeld looked at the little pile of money much as they might have looked at a ladybird which had settled on the desk. Then they both transferred this gaze of gentle interest to Noel.

"I thought you said, Mr. Sykes, that you received the whole amount from our client?"

"So I did."

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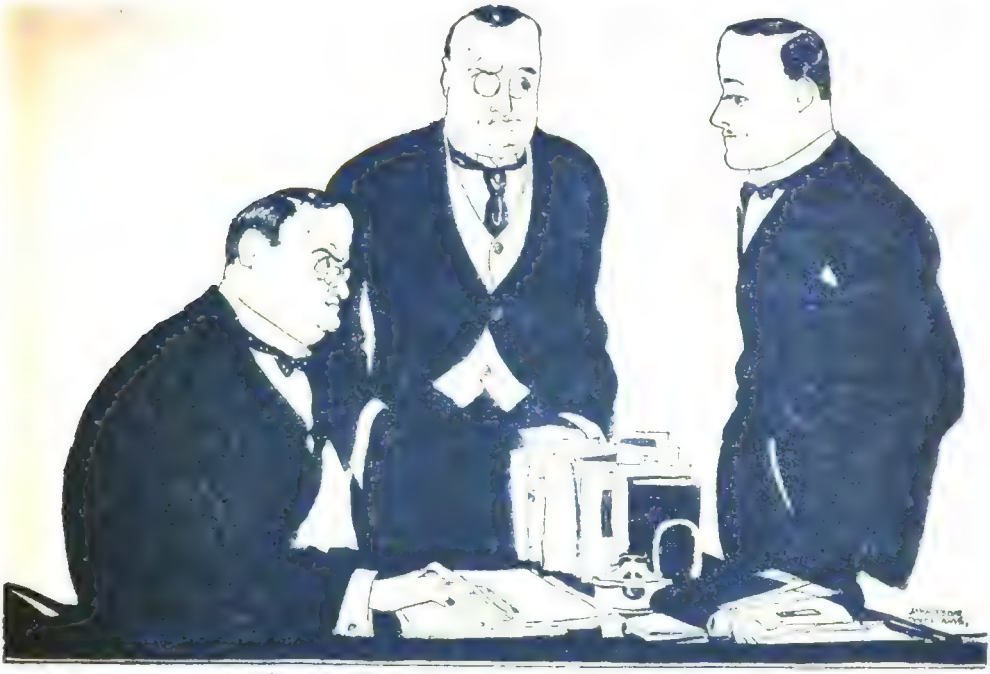

Noel . . . sauntered into the office. Both men looked at him with a good deal of curiosity. "Well, Mr. Sykes," began Nettlefold, "I hear you had a bite for that little two-seater?"

"Then where's the money?"

"I banked it."

"Banked it?" exclaimed Nettlefold. "Who told you to bank it?"

"Nobody. I did it on my own responsibility."

"Indeed? It's very evident that you know nothing whatever about business, Mr. Sykes."

Noel began to look a little bored. Mr. Salkeld, however, brightened the proceedings by getting an idea.

"What time was it when you took out the car, Mr. Sykes?"

"A little after three."

"So I thought. Then, seeing that the banks close at three, I don't quite understand how you banked this money at four or later!" And the manager shot a sideways look at Mr. Nettlefold to see whether that gentleman appreciated the cleverness of the point. But Mr. Nettlefold was fully occupied in staring at Noel.

"I banked it at a Post Office," explained Noel.

"A Post Office?" exclaimed both the others.

"Yes," Noel assured them kindly. "At least, I didn't exactly bank it. I invested the money in War Savings Certificates."

The amazement on the faces of those shrewd men of the world was half-tragic, half-comic. At any rate, they were quite convinced now that they had to deal with the veriest simpleton that ever tried his hand at real business.

"You had no right to do anything of the sort!" Nettlefold broke out. "You far exceeded your instructions, Mr. Sykes! How we invest our money is our own affair! Surely, as a man who has held his Majesty's commission, and is accustomed to discipline, you must realise that you had no right to deal with this money in whatever way you saw fit? What in the world induced you to do such a thing?"

"I was afraid I might spend it," explained Noel quietly.

This was altogether too much for the gravity of Nettlefold and his manager. They roared with laughter at the ingenuous reply. They slapped their knees and enjoyed the situation like one o'clock. At last, when he could recover his gravity, Mr. Nettlefold embarked upon the last speech he intended to make to poor Noel.

"Mr. Sykes," he said, "I'm very sorry, but I fear I must rob you of your little triumph. That old gentleman was not a genuine customer. He was an old friend of mine who knows a good deal about cars and this business of buying and selling them. I got him to come round here in order to give you a test. You did very well with the car, and you were quite right to demand cash. But you have spoilt it all by your extraordinary behaviour with regard to the money.

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It shows a complete incapacity for business. Let me advise you to find some other way of earning a living. I tell you this for your good. Now, if you'll just hand over those Certificates we'll deal with them the best way we can."

Noel, in reply, merely pointed to the money he had already placed on the desk. "That's your share of the deal," he said.

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Nettlefold. "Don't waste any more of our time, Mr. Sykes. We're busy men."

"That old gentleman," observed Noel with increasing languor, "bought the car because she was worth the money. I don't care whether he was a friend of yours or not. He bought the car, and he paid eighty pounds for her in cash. That eighty pounds, less your commission, belongs to me."

"Belongs to you?" cried Nettlefold. And Salkeld quickly left his chair and placed his back against the door.

"Yes, sir. She was my car."

It took nearly a minute for the idea to get root in the agile brains of Nettlefold and Salkeld. The simple soldier lighted a cigarette.

"Well, I'm ——!" breathed Nettlefold.

"So am I!" gasped Salkeld.

Nettlefold turned to the little pile of money on the desk and counted it slowly. "In any case," he said, "this isn't right. Ten per cent. of eighty pounds is eight pounds. There's only six pounds and eight shillings here."

"Oh," yawned Noel, "that's all O.K. I have deducted my commission of twenty per cent. on your eight."

"And that," he told Ursula the same evening, in the same wee corner of the same wee restaurant, "seemed to knock 'em more than all the rest. Salkeld looked a bit sick, but Nettlefold's a sport. He got out the contract right away, and here it is. What shall we drink, old girl?"

"Something very simple," replied Ursula. "But I like it dry, and the year '06 seems to be engraved on my memory."

## AUTUMN SONG.

Tang of frost is in the air,
Gone the green of summer's grace,
Naked grow the trees, and bare,
Fall the leaves apace.
See them gently flutter down—
Oh, the Autumn leaves are brown!—
Brown as Someone's face.

I am caring not at all
For the loss of Summer skies,
For the robin still will call,
Though the mists shall rise,
Creeping up at close of day—
Oh, the Autumn mists are grey!—
Grey as someone's eyes.

Round the fire o' chilly nights,
How the red flames leap and dart!
What a host of dream delights
From the embers start!
Safe and snug from wind or storm,
Oh, the Autumn fires are warm!—
Warm as Someone's heart.

Anne Page.

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# The THIRTEEN POUND LOOK

By W. Pett Ridge.

Marriages are made in Heaven; they occur now and again at St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park, which some folk judge to be the next best place. This second fact has given an idea to the one man who is concentrating his attention and all his amazing fertility of resource on the welfare of our soldiers who will never find their eyesight restored. Anybody else, taking up the work with so much determination, would ere this have wearied the public with his suggestions and appeals; Sir Arthur Pearson has the glorious instinct for doing everything well; he has a commendable reputation for success. I am asked to write a few words in explanation of his new idea, and I comply eagerly because it has to do with little people.

The State is making allowances to its disabled soldiers in a manner that causes authorities of the past to seem miserly; the crossing sweepers, be-medalled and touching their hats deferentially, who came into *Punch* drawings after the Crimean War, will not now be seen; the touts for cabs are unlikely to be the wooden-legged men who made their appearance after later struggles. Sir Arthur Pearson's business is to see that the blind man has some better company than that of a dog, a tin mug, and a gusty accordion; a more useful occupation than the reading aloud, in places where tourists congregate, of pages, set up in Braille type, and the confusion of theological study and personal grievance which comes when one, in passing by, hears the words:

"And Paul said—now where on earth did I put that clay pipe of mine?"

The State, by sums willingly given, is to render this type impossible. Moreover, the State grants a weekly amount for the children of soldiers blinded in the war, and to any entering the world within a definitely named period afterwards. But the State, on the expiration of nine months, must close its purse, and any dear babes who come subsequently, and learn to call their sightless father by the name of Dadda, these are in no way endowed by the Government, nor can the State, acting through the Pensions Minister, affect any interest in the offspring of men who, after being discharged from the Army, love and marry.

Sir Arthur Pearson—able to see further than most of us who reckon our eyes are fairly good—is prepared to set these details right. He hopes (and for Sir Arthur to hope is to achieve) to raise a fund which will permit of an allowance, amounting to five shillings a week, for each of these coming children of the blinded soldier. The sum is to be paid regularly until the youngster reaches the age of sixteen, at which time it can be assumed that the child has come of age, and by earning a salary, is able to dispense with help from other sources.

It sounds like a big business, and this for the reason that it is a big business. In all, the estimate is that £250,000 is the amount required, and money to this extent cannot be produced by the flourish of a fairy wand or by the uttering of magic words at the entrance to a cave.

Sir Arthur Pearson has something to take the place of these old-time and labour-saving tricks. He recognises that, concerning the care of our men from whom the war has stolen eyesight, the general feeling is that the job is one which should be done superbly well. He knows, as few know, the wide and generous sympathy which has been aroused during the war. He is aware of the numerous and almost numberless folk who have drawn

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cheques, adorned with prepossessing figures, to help the work at St. Dunstan's. Sir Arthur appreciates the circumstance that all this kindness is far from being exhausted. He feels that, in making this appeal, he is not

"Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!"

There exists, you will observe, no reason why the young bachelors at St. Dunstan's should remain bachelors; members of the Eugenics Education Society would find no just cause or impediment to their marriage. Indeed, seeing that they need a companion who can help to make two eyes serve as four, it is desirable they should wed, and the spirit of romance in every girl's heart arranges that opportunities are found. When the first baby arrives, and he takes it in his arms and hears the young mother's enthusiastic description of the little mite, the assurance that here is the best and bonniest that ever came into the world, its likeness to ancestors—"Your father's chin, and my mother's eyes!"—then it will, believe me, be counted no sort of drawback that the small person is immediately entered on the books of the Blinded Soldiers' Children Fund, receiving straightway the income of £13 a year that enables it to become in the household an independent gentleman or a lady with a competency. There need be nothing of gratitude on the side of the parents. The Fund, contributions to which should be sent to Sir Arthur Pearson, St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park, represents an effort to repay a debt that the nation owes to its heroes.

One can picture the surroundings as the child grows up. A house in the suburbs, and a road where Number Twenty-four is famous and acclaimed by neighbours, because the occupier was out in France, you know, at the time of the dreadful war, and a shell burst near to him, and really it's quite wonderful to notice how he gets about, and, of course, everyone is very helpful, but still, there he is, going to work (thanks to having been taught a trade after leaving the Army), and it is reported on good authority that his scarlet runners in the back garden——(You can imagine how conversation in the suburbs goes easily to garden produce).

But what the neighbours say of Twenty-four is of less importance than what the little house thinks of itself. It has reason to think highly, if only because of the interesting nature of the contents. Over the folding doors of the sitting-room is a German rifle marked, "Erfurt, 1915." Near the pianoforte a British trench hat, dented. On the pianoforte, photographs of the occupier of Twenty-four as he was before he joined up; as he appeared gazing cheerfully at the camera in a military town, and with a group of men, after his return, taken on a sunny afternoon in the Botanic Gardens—but the men cannot see the sunshine—with their guides in the foreground. Also a portrait of a nurse.

The householder at Twenty-four did not marry the nurse, for it is only in short stories that there are enough lady members of a hospital staff for one to be served out to each patient.

His choice was nevertheless excellent, and she sits at the window, glancing up from her work now and again when some boy passes along, and doing the mental arithmetic which obsesses mothers in a house where expenditure is never permitted to exceed limited income. A whistle outside.

"Well, Douglas?" to her son at the front door. "Been a good lad at school?" (The question is put in the suburbs a million and one times, and there is no report of a single occasion when the answer varied.) "That's a dear, and now wipe your boots and come in and have your tea, and do your home lessons, and then you'll be free when Dad arrives."

At half-past six the youth takes up an official duty. Although the people on the 'buses are so good to Dad, it is desirable he should be met in the main road as he alights, and an escort provided. Wherefore the boy sets out, and, subsequently, is a proud boy because, in accompanying Dad, so great a man as a sergeant of the police stops to give himself the pleasure of a chat with an old comrade, and there is talk of Vimy, and Messines, and other names which the boy encounters in the later pages of his history book. The father and son are having their game of chess indoors when the last post arrives. It brings a remittance.

"That's really yours, Duggy, my boy," says his mother, setting the postal order carefully aside and using the formula of the situation. "But me and your father look after it for you. It has come in very handy, I assure you, all these years because, as I've told you before, and as you know well, your father lost his sight when he was fighting for his country."

"Rough luck on you, Dad."

"My country," says the boy's father, with deliberation, "my country treated me fairly and treated me well!"

* * * * *

My own view—which I know is shared by Sir Arthur Pearson, and, I hope, by you—is that we shall find nothing more pleasant to listen to in the days to come than the

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# MR. MARCHMENT PROPOSES.

By Muriel Isaac.

*"The light that lies*
*In woman's eyes,*
*Has been my heart's undoing."*

I.

I must emphasise the fact that when Heather Ducros came down the steps three at a time, cheeks flushed and crisp skirts flying, as the 6.35 to Kirton was moving slowly out of the station, the carriage into which she fell, gasping for breath, was a first-class smoker, containing its usual quota of City men. Had it been otherwise, the momentous events to be recorded would never have happened.

It was astonishing the difference her advent into the carriage made, as she leant back into the only empty corner. There was something vivid about her—perhaps it was her hair, or the certainty lying in her eyes that, however boring the present might be, there was always a better adventure to be met with round the next corner of the road.

She glanced round the carriage as she regained her breath, taking stock of the occupants, noticed half-unconsciously the man in the opposite corner who was reading one of the motor papers, opened her music-case and wished she had practised more. One did not don one's prettiest frock, get away from the City early, and venture into the wilds of Kirton to sing at a concert every night.

It was towards the end of the journey that she looked up to find the man in the corner watching her, with a curious concentrated stare. His eyes were forceful and compelling, and Heather's colour deepened just a little as they met and held hers. Then the train slid into Kirton station, they both got up, and he leant forward and opened the door.

"Thank you very much," she said in that clear, jolly voice of hers, and stepped down to meet Doris Faversham, who cried:

"Cheers! I'm so glad you've come. Have you got heaps of music? Frank's bagged a taxi, and we ought to be at the hall in twenty minutes."

An hour later Heather mounted the stage. The hall was new, and the walls and partitions were of a shining American white wood, varnished over, the lights were incandescent gas of the whitest, and as she stood against the dazzlingly clean boards, the lines of her short black frock, the vivid curling masses of her hair, showed to their greatest advantage.

Her place was fourth on the programme, and she was the first performer to be encored. She came off flushed and smiling, and as Frank helped her down from the white platform, Doris said:

"Frank, d'you know who's here? I saw him come up to the front while Heather was singing. Mr. Marchment!"

"What, *the* Marchment? Good Lord! I must go and look him up. Haven't seen him since the last Reliability Trial."

"Why is he so special?" asked Heather, as Frank lifted the curtain and disappeared into the hall.

"Well, he's—I don't know. Have you ever heard of Marchment, Fortescue, & Co.? I thought, being a business person, you might have. He's quite young, and yet he's got pots and pots of money and a place out here. He has the reputation of being a frightfully clever business man—self-made, you know, hard as nails, and fairly unscrupulous. He just lives alone, with half-a-dozen servants or so. When he first came, of course he was bombarded with invitations, but he simply ignored the lot."

"Why isn't he in the Army?" asked Heather idly.

"Exempt—head of a business and too important, and that sort of thing," said Doris. "I expect he wangled it—you can do anything if you've got money. I think he's hateful myself, and *most* terrifying, but Frank likes him. They're both crazy about the new 16 h.p. Cæsar model, and Frank thinks he's a jolly good sort. What on *earth* he's here for I can't imagine, but you can just guess how excited these folk'll be——" She broke off to clutch Heather's arm. "Good heavens, if he isn't——!"

The curtain was lifted, and, as someone hammered out the accompaniment to "The Long, Long Trail" on the platform beyond, Frank Faversham said:

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"Miss Ducros—Mr. Marchment. My sister, Marchment."

And Heather found herself looking into the watchful eyes of the man in the train.

She never could remember exactly how it happened, but in a very short space of time she was sitting in the farther corner of the small ante-room, where Guy Marchment, leaning against the table beside her, was offering his cigarette-case. Doris and her brother had been called off to take their turn at performing.

After a little pause, "Somebody—Mr. Faversham or somebody—said you were keen on the new Cæsar model," Heather said, looking up through the smoke at him.

"Why, what do you know about the Cæsar?" asked Marchment. His keen eyes were faintly amused. And Heather noticed the strong, firm lines of nose and chin, the calm, assured air the man had of being able to tackle any proposition he chose and bring it to a successful end.

She coloured faintly.

"I'm secretary to the Manager of the Motor Accessories Company," she said simply. "I'm a business person. I don't fit in with these county folks at all—really."

"Oh, I knew that," he said, and then talk ran swiftly. Her cheeks were brilliant, her eyes alight with interest, as she sat back in the square Windsor chair the curate probably used at committee meetings, and listened to Marchment. The other performers, slightly disapproving, drifted in and out, or stood for a while hoping to get a chance to engage the great man in conversation, and then retired again. Once someone came to the door, and Marchment crossed the room and spoke quietly, decisively. Heather was looking dreamily in front of her.

"Isn't it time I was going?" she asked as he came back. "I've got to catch the 10.30 back to town, you know."

"No; it's quite early. I'll see you get home all right."

It was twenty minutes later that Heather woke up. "I say, it *must* be late," she said, and jumped up. "I wonder what's happened to the Favershams. Goodness knows what I'll do if I miss the train."

She went to the door, to be met by the organiser of the concert, in cloak and goloshes.

"Why, Miss Ducros," she exclaimed, "I thought you had gone a long time ago! When dear Doris came to say good-bye just now, she said you had gone on early in Mr. Gale-Tarrant's car; that you were in a hurry, and hadn't time to say good-bye to her. I really——" Heather gave a gasp of dismay. The clock stood at 10.20!

"But I was here all the time, and I didn't——"

Marchment quietly took the matter into his own hands.

"I've got my car here. I came over in it. I can take Miss Ducros to the station," he said.

As he tucked the big rug round her, and they slid off down the hill, Heather was thinking.

"Aren't we there yet?" she asked, five minutes later.

"No," he answered, looking steadily ahead into the night.

There was another long silence. Then she said:

"Mr. Marchment, surely we ought to be at the station by now?"

"We passed it ten minutes ago," he said, and with his free hand showed her a small clock among the dial faces in front of her. The hands stood at a quarter-to-eleven.

"But," she said breathlessly, and put a hand to her cheek in bewilderment, "you look as if you didn't mind—as if it didn't matter losing the last train to town!"

"It doesn't," he said. "I'm driving you home, and you'll probably get there sooner than if you had caught the train."

Heather began to think. It was not consistent with his character, as she judged it, his exact and definite manner of doing things, that he should have kept her talking so as to miss her train out of mere carelessness. If it were not carelessness, he had done it on purpose, and then——

She leant forward, and met his curious, arresting gaze as he turned. Her heart beat rather fast.

"Did you *know* it was late?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

"And the Favershams?"

"I sent word to them that you'd gone on."

"But why—why on earth——?"

"So that I should have time and opportunity to ask you to marry me."

"Business methods?" flashed Heather. She was beyond surprise at anything this extraordinary young man might do.

"If you like—my methods, anyway—you might begin to think about it. We've got another forty minutes or so."

There was silence for a while. Then Heather suddenly laughed, a clear gurgle of appreciation. Surely this was a better adventure than anything she had ever imagined.

After a pause, she leant forward, a little breathless.

"D'you know, it's odd, but I've always had a sort of infant dream of myself standing on

["MR. MARCHMENT PROPOSES" *continued over leaf.*]

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a staircase in a wonderful gown, receiving diplomats and ambassadors with the most exquisite ease and tact, with a negligible husband somewhere in the background. Could you give me a staircase to stand on and diplomats to handle?"

"I could give you all of it—substituting underwriters and stockbrokers and a millionaire or two for the court circles—the staircase and the gowns, all of it—except the negligible husband."

Heather coloured faintly.

"Well," she declared at length, "I don't really want it. Goodness knows why the idea bubbles out so when it gets a chance. I should be tired of the white paint and bright lights and thick carpets in ten minutes, and simply ache for a green frock I'd made myself, and one water-colour I'd framed myself, and potatoes I'd cooked myself, and a little intelligent humanity. Don't *you* want to ask any questions?"

"No." Marchment smiled lazily. "I've made up my mind, you see. I made it up when you got out of the train this evening. That's why I came to the concert."

"Did you really?"

"Why, of course. When you want a thing, you naturally take immediate steps to get it, don't you?"

They were driving along roads bordered by houses now, and as the car slid to a standstill—"You haven't answered yet," he said, and laid an arresting arm across her knees as she began to unwind the rug.

Then again she met his eyes in the moonlight. Something stirred inside her and leapt into life. She tried to turn her head, but could not. How could she think sanely, reasonably, as a business women should, with those eyes upon her? Her cheeks burnt. Then Marchment laughed softly, and released her.

Afterwards she discovered it was only on very rare occasions that he ever laughed.

"I'm sorry," he said; "I won't bother you," and opened the door for her to get out. He waited until the door of the house closed behind her, then turned the car neatly, and slid off up the road.

II.

The next morning Heather pulled the front door to with a sudden jar that made the little panes of glass rattle. It was one of those depressing days which might belong to spring, summer, autumn, or winter—it doesn't matter much and you don't care. So it *had* happened after all! "When you want a thing you naturally take immediate steps to get it, don't you?" She could hear his voice. And then his quiet, satisfied "I'm sorry—I won't bother you." Why had he suddenly ceased to press for an answer?

Ah, well! She drew a deep breath. Of course, it was only an absurd and exciting game, and now it was all over.

In most moods the City fascinated Heather; London Wall and Lothbury and Lombard Street were words to conjure with, and her work was an entrancing pastime—as a rule. This dull morning she was interested in neither her work nor the City, and as she took off her hat and pulled her bright hair into position, she murmured into the small mirror:

"Oh, bother the Motor Accessories Company!"

Then the telephone bell rang, and the office-boy came in to say she was wanted. Heather left her room and took up the receiver listlessly:

"Hullo?"

"Hullo! Good-morning, Miss Ducros. Marchment speaking. I rang up to ask if you'd made up your mind yet?"

The colour flamed in her cheeks. After all, the City wasn't such a bad place!

"About what?" she asked, simply to gain time.

"As to how soon you'll marry me."

"I—I can't ever make up my mind before ten o'clock in the morning. Besides——"

"Well?"

"How can I tell you now? Do you think I've got a private 'phone into my own room?"

"No—I'm pretty sure there's an office-boy, or one or two foolish little girls who haven't started work yet, listening to you. But be ambiguous—if it really matters; I don't think it does. You won't be there long."

"No? I fail to see——" Heather was annoyed by the assumption. Then she heard someone say at Marchment's end of the 'phone:

"He's in a hurry, sir; wants a quotation," and Marchment's voice, curt, different, answered:

"Thirty thousand — all right. Fifteen bob."

"He says he can get it for 14s. 6d.—such a large amount——"

"Then let him try. He won't. When he comes back, tell him it's 15s. 6d.—— Well? Have you made up your mind?"

"You know I have," said Heather. "I am mad, of course, but within limits. No. Good-bye," and, obeying some instinct she could not explain, she hung up the receiver. She had a moment of pure pleasure as she went back, light-footed, to her room. The

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great Marchment! Had anyone ever cut short a conversation with him just like that? She pictured his expression as he sat at his desk. His eyes would narrow—those wonderful eyes! What would be his next move?

It was at 12 o'clock, when she was deep in the compilation of a letter in connection with a recently discovered substitute for petrol, searching for the exact and tactful word, that Mr. Bannister sent for her.

As she entered her chief's room and shut the door behind her, she collected her faculties with a sudden jerk. Marchment, in immaculate grey clothes, was sitting opposite him, in the chair reserved for important visitors.

"Oh—er—Miss Ducros, are you very busy to-day? Not, I think?"

"No—not very," Heather answered.

"Because Mr. Marchment's in need of efficient help in connection with some business he's been talking over with me, and I want to lend him your services for the day. I'm sure you won't mind?" Mr. Bannister was a considerate chief.

Heather's eyes met Marchment's in a lightning glance. "How dare you?" said hers. His were inscrutable.

Then he produced a card.

"We're only just the other side of London Wall," he said. "It's very good of you. Thanks awfully, Bannister. Ask for me, Miss Ducros."

And he was gone, and Heather back in her room and putting on her hat almost before she had realised the thing at all. *How dared* he, when he knew she couldn't refuse? To commandeer her services like that! Then she looked in the glass at her new brown frock with its gold stitchery, and murmured inconsequently:

"I'm glad I put it on."

She found the offices of Messrs. Marchment, Fortescue, & Company bigger than her own, a place of polished floors and noiselessly swinging doors. She was taken straight into Marchment's room, meeting a plump and puzzled-looking maiden coming out, and felt suddenly shy and very much in awe of him as the atmosphere of the room took effect on her, and she faced him across his own table. There was the faintest hint of a smile in his eyes.

"Ah!—won't you take your hat off? Pegs over there," he said, and then drew some papers towards him as Heather came across to his side.

"You see?" he asked, pointing out figures and facts. "I'm insuring this new petrol substitute of Bannister's, and until we know its composition, the risk's a difficult one to gauge. I can't explain to the shorthand lady who usually does my letters—it takes her weeks to grasp anything new. If——" he showed her swiftly and clearly.

Heather felt as if she were being tested, and all her brains, her experience, all her quick intuition flew to her aid, so that, though most of the matter was new to her, almost every word Marchment said was registered on her brain, and she forgot the personal matter at issue between them in the fierce joy of grasping the problem he stated.

At last she took the papers away to the desk he had had put for her in the opposite corner, her mind a whirl of facts, but as she read them through again the thing sorted itself out plainly in her mind, and she knew she would be able to do what this extraordinary young man required.

He had been called out of the room, and came back as she looked up.

"Names and addresses? The room at the end of the passage—Miss Williams'll give them to you," he said, and held the door open for her.

"How Miss Williams'll hate me!" thought Heather, as she entered a room full of girls, but found, on the contrary, that that plump and worried young woman was only too anxious to be friends, and to do anything to help one whom she considered obviously was much to be pitied.

"Doesn't he dictate fast?" she said sympathetically.

"Does he?" said Heather. "He only just told me roughly what he wanted to say."

"There! And you've got to make the letters all up? I say, it *is* a shame! And yet I know you can't *say* anything—he makes you feel like a silly little worm if you ever dare to ask questions. I wonder—would you mind taking him this policy? He said he must have it before lunch, and I'm scared to death to go into his room."

"Of course I will. Thank you so much," said Heather, smiling, and went back to her task.

Half-a-dozen people came in to see Marchment, talking in terms of thousands, as she sat typing her letters in the corner; but at half-past one he got rid of the last, and came to stand in front of her.

"Well, madam? Lunch-time. Anywhere special you'd like to go?"

Now that she was getting used to the great man's importance, she was less afraid of him. She laid her arms across her typewriter and looked up at him.

"I'm not coming out to lunch with you," she said.

"No?"

"No; this is business. The strain of

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[redacted]ing your secretary here and your guest at lunch-time would really be too much, even for me. Do I have an hour off—sir?"

He favoured her with one searching glance, but did not pursue the matter further.

She finished her work early in the afternoon, and sat looking it over, listening to and observing Marchment's methods, as he saw client after client, discussed a hundred things with his head clerk, made innumerable deals over the telephone.

One small incident interested her. It was the advent of a bronzed young man in khaki whom he hailed affectionately as the "Tank merchant."

"And when is it going to be your turn, old chap?" asked this latter, seated comfortably on the great man's desk.

Marchment smiled grimly.

"*How* can I come," he said, "when there's hardly a decent man left in the firm—nothing but girls and small boys? No glory for me, worse luck."

So he *did* want to go, reflected Heather.

At four o'clock Miss Williams brought tea.

"Tell them I won't see anybody else, whoever it is, please," said Marchment, "and not to put anyone through on the 'phone unless it absolutely can't wait till the morning."

As the door closed behind her he swung a chair into position beside his desk.

"Come and have tea," he said to Heather.

She brought her letters across to him.

"Won't you look at these first?"

She knew an anxious moment as he read the neat sheets and signed them, and pure elation at having done the difficult thing successfully.

"Thanks. Sit down," he said, and as she took her teacup, leant back in his chair to watch her.

"Forgiven me yet?" he asked.

"I don't think it was fair to make me come. I couldn't——"

Her voice suddenly failed her before the look in his eyes. She put down her cup again. There are moments in one's life when stimulants are unnecessary.

"'All's fair,'" he said, "'in——'"

"Is it?" Her voice trembled. "But I don't know which this is."

"I do, though; and, anyway, there's not a great deal of difference between them. . . . Well?"

"I—I don't know you."

"Are you quite sure you don't?"

There was a long pause.

"And you don't know me," she went on desperately. "I might drink or do crochet, or be facetious, or—or—fond of gardening, for all you know."

"I'm taking the risk," said he.

"I—I——" Her nerve was beginning to give way. "May I go now?"

He raised his eyebrows with an air of faint surprise. "Why—no." He got up and stood looking down at her. "Now, honestly, aren't you just making talk to gain time?"

She rose too, pushing back her chair. And then, somehow, without more words from either of them, he was holding her close to him, kissing her cheeks, her lips, her eyes.

When at last she broke away, exhausted but radiant, it was from a new Marchment. He was still grave, but the grim look had almost disappeared.

Then she began to laugh, a trembling little laugh distilled of happiness.

"I was just wondering what the people at Kirton would think," she said.

## A COMPARISON.

When winds sang soft, and summer skies
  Were bright with sunset glory,
Ere they were wed, Bob to his Kate
  Would tell the old, old story.

But now when Robert comes home late,
  He makes excuses hoary;
"Detained late at the office, dear"—
  He tells the old, old story.

Elsie Skeet.

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# MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

*Tidings of Good Cheer.*

## ROYAL ANCESTRY.

It is pleasing to reflect that as far back as 1759 the Royal had a dignified ancestor, or so I learn from a discourse on "Which Was the First Magazine?" which appears in *Everyman. The Royal Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Companion*—they ran to words in those days!—was a weighty periodical, the "star turn" of its number being entitled "Reflections on Human Reason." The present-day Royal has its own traditions; it deals with less ponderous subjects, for it is our pleasure to mellow a grey and prosaic world by giving you live, up-to-date articles and the best procurable in the way of adventure, humorous, and love stories.

## A BOOK YOU CAN'T RESIST.

Good love stories are hard to get, and it is given to the privileged few to write stories that linger in the memory by reason of their abiding freshness and charm. If you have read "V.A.D.," by Christine Jope-Slade, which appears on page 429, you will understand my meaning, and you will also be interested in a book by this gifted young authoress, entitled "A Mother's Letters to Her Son." These letters are among the most human and appealing ever written; they are alight with the flame of mother-love and longing, brimming over with courage and delicious bits of philosophy. The book costs only 2s. 6d., or may be had direct from the Publisher, 18, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. 2, for 2s. 10d. post free.

## "SUITED."

The man with the haunted look studied the advertisement in the window for a minute or two, and then entered the shop.

"I see you stock 'Grigg's Patent Slug Exterminator," he said. "I'll have a hundred pounds of it."

"A hundred pounds!" gasped the shopkeeper. "That would be enough to kill all the slugs in England!"

"Exactly," agreed the haunted one. "They're all in my garden."

This is only one of the many funny stories included in "That's a Good Story," a book of jokes, just published by this firm at the price of a shilling. It is packed with others, each one guaranteed to produce laughter from the veriest sphinx. If you want to win a reputation as a *raconteur*, to be popular and sought after in society, this book will be your salvation. There will be no awkward silences when you are present, and all the hostesses within a ten-mile radius will compete for the chance of providing you with free meals.

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I acknowledge, with sincere thanks from Miss Cooper and myself, the following amounts:

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# THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

## CONTENTS FOR MAY, 1917.

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a Design by Charles Horrell. | | |
| MISS IRENE RUSSELL. From a Photograph by Bertram Park | | *Frontispiece* |
| THE BACKBONE OF REVUE<br>Illustrated from Photographs. | MARGARET CHUTE | 3 |
| WHY NOT A WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT?<br>Illustrated. | HORATIO BOTTOMLEY | 8 |
| A PORTERHOUSE STEAK. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by Treyer Evans. | MRS. STANLEY WRENCH | 11 |
| PLEASE HELP THE KIDDIES!<br>Illustrated. | GLADYS COOPER | 16 |
| THE WAY OF A SOLDIER. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by H. W. Koekkoek. | E. A. MORPHY | 17 |
| THE JOTTINGS OF A SUBALTERN.—VI. MARJORIE<br>Illustrated by Gladys Peto. | | 26 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO"<br>Illustrated. | | 30 |
| GIRLS AND MR. GUMBLAY.—I. PRUNELLA. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 31 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS<br>Illustrated from Photographs. | | 38 |
| PETTICOAT INFLUENCE. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by Bertram Prance. | ROY VICKERS | 40 |
| THUMBS UP!<br>Illustrated by the Author. | C. FLEMING WILLIAMS | 47 |
| LOUDER THAN WORDS. A Poem | BERNARD MOORE | 51 |
| CAP AND BELLS<br>Illustrated. | | 52 |
| WAKING UP WISTARIA. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by Balliol Salmon. | DOROTHY ROSE | 55 |
| THE STORY OF JONATHAN RUST. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by E. Prater. | "TAFFRAIL" | 62 |
| THE COMING OF A DREAM. A Poem | ANNE PAGE | 68 |
| MY GREATEST TEMPTATION<br>Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 69 |
| FRENCH TO THE FINGERTIPS<br>Illustrated from Photographs. | GINA PALERME | 72 |
| THREE GOLDEN DAYS. A Poem<br>Illustrated by Reginald F. Smith. | DUDLEY NICHOLS | 75 |
| A TOUCH OF PAINT. A Complete Story<br>Illustrated by Steven Spurrier. | C. RANDOLPH LICHFIELD | 76 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE | | 84 |


*N.B.*—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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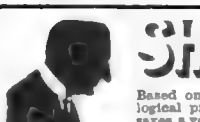

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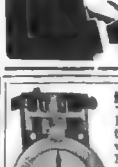

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# THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

***CONTENTS FOR JUNE, 1917.***

**PUBLISHED MONTHLY.**

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a design by J. Dewar Mills. | | |
| MISS SHIRLEY KELLOGG. From a Photograph by Malcolm Arbuthnot ... ... ... | | *Frontispiece* |
| FROM FARMYARD TO FOOTLIGHTS ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Photographs. | SHIRLEY KELLOGG | 87 |
| THE LUCK OF THE *JEHOSHAPHAT*. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Ernest Prater. | "TAFFRAIL" | 91 |
| SEVEN HATS FOR LUCK. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by L. C. Bruno. | ROSEMARY NORTH | 98 |
| THE SHELL TRAIN. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by A. Gilbert. | WILFRID L. RANDELL | 103 |
| PRISCILLA. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | ANNE PAGE | 107 |
| WOULD I LIKE TO LIVE MY LIFE OVER AGAIN? ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | HORATIO BOTTOMLEY | 108 |
| A MAN OF SPIRIT. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Wilmot Lunt. | WILLIAM MERRIAM ROUSE | 112 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Photographs. | | 118 |
| FOR THE SAKE OF DRAMATIC EFFECT. A Complete Story ... ... ... Illustrated by J. Dewar Mills. | GWEN NISBET | 120 |
| IS BELLONA BLATANT? ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Treyer Evans. | FRANK ST. AUSTELL | 128 |
| THE SNIPER SNIPED. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Frank Gillette. | M. MCDONNELL BODKIN | 131 |
| CAP AND BELLS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | | 136 |
| DELICATE FABRICS. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 140 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO" ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 147 |
| THE SICK BAY ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by C. M. Padday. | JOHN S. MARGERISON | 148 |
| LIFE WITHOUT LUXURIES ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 153 |
| THE FLUTE OF ARCADY. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by J. R. Skelton. | DOROTHY E. PAUL | 156 |
| GRAN'MA. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | ETHEL TALBOT | 162 |
| DEFYING THE DUCHESS. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... | E. NEWTON BUNGEY | 163 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 168 |


*N.B.*—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

## *CONTENTS FOR JULY, 1917.*

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a Design by Nathan Dean. | | |
| MISS KATHLENE MARTYN. From a Photograph by Elwin Neame ... ... ... ... | | *Frontispiece* |
| THE FUN OF BEING A FLAPPER ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Photographs. | KATHLENE MARTYN | 171 |
| ROOSEVELT—MAN OF ACTION ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | HARRY E. BRITTAIN | 176 |
| A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Treyer Evans. | PHILIP O'FARRELL | 178 |
| CHAMPAGNE. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | FRANÇOIS | 182 |
| THE *SHAMEEN* PIRATES. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Ernest Prater. | "TAFFRAIL" | 183 |
| A PLEA FOR THE BABIES ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | HORATIO BOTTOMLEY | 190 |
| THE PROSAIC LOVER. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | GWEN NISBET | 193 |
| PHILLIP AND THE FLAPPERS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... I.—SIDONIE, SOME SURPRISES, AND A BONEHEAD. Illustrated by Gladys Peto. | W. DOUGLAS NEWTON | 194 |
| A FIXTURE IN TOWN. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | DOROTHY ROSE | 199 |
| A COMEDY IN CALICO. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... Illustrated by A. Garrett. | MRS. STANLEY WRENCH | 200 |
| THE CUT O' THE JIB. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | BERNARD MOORE | 206 |
| PLEASE HELP THE KIDDIES! ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | GLADYS COOPER | 207 |
| CAP AND BELLS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | | 208 |
| A DRAMA OF THE NIGHT. A Complete Story ... Illustrated by C. Fleming Williams. | CLAUDE GRAHAME-WHITE AND HARRY HARPER | 212 |
| "MY WIFE WON'T LET ME!" ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 220 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO" ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated. | | 223 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated from Photographs. | | 224 |
| THE UNREPENTANT WARD. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 226 |
| THE WISDOM OF O-KE-SAN. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... ... Illustrated by Tom Peddie. | WALTER MORRIS | 233 |
| THE "BANSHEE'S" OVERTIME. A Complete Story ... ... ... ... | WILFRID L. RANDELL | 240 |
| EGYPT. A Poem ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | ANNE PAGE | 243 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 244 |


*N.B.*—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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## *CONTENTS FOR AUGUST, 1917.*

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a Design by Wilmot Lunt. | | |
| MDLLE. LUCIENNE DERVYLE. From a Photograph by Yevonde | | *Frontispiece* |
| "BATHING AS HE IS DONE" Illustrated from Photographs. | LUCIENNE DERVYLE | 247 |
| SHOULD MEN BE MADE TO MARRY? Illustrated. | HORATIO BOTTOMLEY | 252 |
| THE LITTLE WHITE ROSE. A Poem | BERNARD MOORE | 255 |
| "GOOD MORNING, ROSE!" A Complete Story Illustrated by Treyer Evans. | LOUISE HEILGERS | 256 |
| MOODS. A Poem | GWEN NISBET | 260 |
| THE PARTNERS OF FAMEWATER. A Complete Story Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds. | H. MORTIMER BATTEN | 261 |
| BACK TO THE LAND. A Poem | ANNE PAGE | 266 |
| THE MAGIC OF "MAKE-UP" Illustrated from Photographs. | MATHESON LANG | 267 |
| TERRIBLE TRIFLES Illustrated by A. K. Macdonald. | MAY EDGINTON | 271 |
| PRIVATE BLUNDELL.—STRETCHER-BEARER. A Complete Story Illustrated by Frank Gillette. | RALPH DURAND | 275 |
| PENNY PLAIN. A Complete Story Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 282 |
| CAP AND BELLS Illustrated. | | 285 |
| "GLAD RAGS." A Complete Story Illustrated by Balliol Salmon. | JESSIE POPE | 294 |
| *L'ENTENTE ÉTABLIE.* A Poem | R. G. T. | 300 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO" Illustrated. | | 301 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS Illustrated from Photographs. | | 302 |
| ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. A Complete Story Illustrated by Steven Spurrier. | JENNIE HARRIS OLIVER | 304 |
| UP AGAINST IT Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 311 |
| PHILLIP AND THE FLAPPERS. II.—THE REALLY PRETTIEST Illustrated by Gladys Peto. | W. DOUGLAS NEWTON | 314 |
| THE BOLT THAT JAMMED. A Complete Story | E. R. PUNSHON | 320 |
| THE GARDEN GATE. A Poem | MABEL DEAN | 324 |
| THE CAR OF MANY REGRETS. A Complete Story | EDWIN BRACKETT HUNTER | 325 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE | | 328 |


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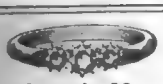

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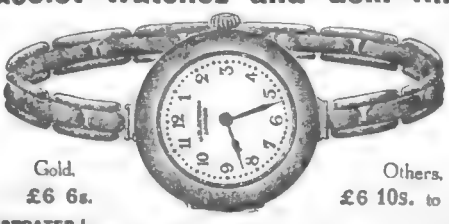

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# THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

## CONTENTS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1917.

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a Design by R. C. Peter. | | |
| MISS BILLIE CARLETON. From a Photograph by Bertram Park | | *Frontispiece* |
| COOL OR CONVENTIONAL? Illustrated from Photographs. | BILLIE CARLETON | 331 |
| THE BLUE SILK DRESS. A Complete Story Illustrated by Norah Schlegel. | JAMES FRANCIS DWYER | 336 |
| PHILLIP AND THE FLAPPERS. III.—HOPPERY Illustrated by Gladys Peto. | W. DOUGLAS NEWTON | 343 |
| NURSE. A Poem | ETHEL TALBOT | 348 |
| RASTALL'S REVENGE. A Complete Story Illustrated by Frank Gillette. | T. C. BRIDGES | 349 |
| WANTED! A FIGHTING FAITH Illustrated. | REV. F. H. GILLINGHAM | 354 |
| CAP AND BELLS Illustrated. | | 358 |
| ICED DRINKS. A Complete Story Illustrated by Bert Thomas. | CHARLES DIXON DIXON | 363 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS Illustrated from Photographs. | | 368 |
| PROPER TO HER RANK. A Complete Story Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 370 |
| WASTED OPPORTUNITIES. A Poem | DOROTHY ROSE | 376 |
| "FILMITIS" Illustrated by John Hassall. | GEORGE ROBEY | 377 |
| A WAR-TIME GARDEN. A Poem | ANNE PAGE | 380 |
| THE HERMIT CRAB. A Complete Story Illustrated by J. Dewar Mills. | JESSIE POPE | 381 |
| THE AMPHIBIANS. A Complete Story Illustrated by C. M. Padday. | FRANCIS V. SMITH | 387 |
| FORTUNES OF WAR. A Poem | LESLIE MARY OYLER | 394 |
| LUCK. A Complete Story Illustrated by A. K. Macdonald. | J. E. WHEELWRIGHT | 395 |
| GETTING THEIR DESERTS Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 401 |
| YOUR OPINION, PLEASE! Illustrated. | | 404 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO" Illustrated. | | 406 |
| THE RACOON. A Complete Story | DOROTHY E. PAUL | 407 |
| A TUBE TRAGEDY. A Poem | MABEL DEAN | 411 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE | | 412 |


*N.B.*—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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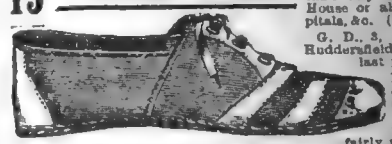

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## *CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER, 1917.*

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| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| COVER. From a Design by S. Abbey. | | |
| MISS MARIE BLANCHE. From a Photograph by Wrather & Buys | | *Frontispiece* |
| IS IT A CRIME TO BE VERSATILE? Illustrated from Photographs. | MARIE BLANCHE | 415 |
| THE HOMEWARD TRAIL. A Complete Story Illustrated by J. R. Skelton. | H. MORTIMER BATTEN | 420 |
| THE SPOILS OF WAR. A Poem | ETHEL TALBOT | 424 |
| WILL THE SKIRT GO? Illustrated by Treyer Evans. | MAX PEMBERTON | 425 |
| HOLDING CAPACITY. A Poem | ROSEMARY NORTH | 428 |
| "V.A.D."—(VOLUNTARY AND DELIGHTFUL). A Complete Story Illustrated by Norah Schlegel. | CHRISTINE JOPE-SLADE | 429 |
| PRIVILEGED. A Poem | ROLAND GOODCHILD | 434 |
| "JOSS." A Complete Story Illustrated by Ernest Prater. | FRANCIS V. SMITH | 435 |
| PHILLIP AND THE FLAPPERS. IV.—TOWEL TACTICS Illustrated by Gladys Peto. | W. DOUGLAS NEWTON | 443 |
| FOR "SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO" Illustrated. | | 449 |
| PICTURE PARAGRAPHS Illustrated from Photographs. | | 450 |
| A LAW UNTO HERSELF. A Complete Story Illustrated by Balliol Salmon. | DOROTHY ROSE | 452 |
| A NAVAL COURT-MARTIAL. Illustrated by Frank Gillette. | JOHN S. MARGERISON | 459 |
| "IF WISHES WERE HORSES——" Illustrated from Drawings. | LESBIA ROBINSON | 463 |
| THE LATTER REIGN. A Complete Story Illustrated by Stanley Davis. | F. E. BAILY | 466 |
| ROSES AND HONEYSUCKLE. A Poem | ADA LEONORA HARRIS | 472 |
| CAP AND BELLS Illustrated. | | 473 |
| POOR DR. DOWNEY Illustrated by Nathan Dean. | T. O'MEARA | 478 |
| A FOOL AT THE GAME. A Complete Story Illustrated by M. Watson Williams. | KEBLE HOWARD | 480 |
| AUTUMN SONG. A Poem | ANNE PAGE | 486 |
| THE THIRTEEN POUND LOOK Illustrated. | W. PETT RIDGE | 487 |
| MR. MARCHMENT PROPOSES. A Complete Story | MURIEL ISAAC | 489 |
| A COMPARISON. A Poem | ELSIE SKEET | 493 |
| MR. EDITOR—HIS PAGE | | 494 |


*N.B.*—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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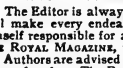

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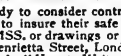

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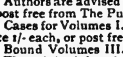

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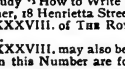

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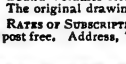

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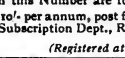

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# The Hall-Mark of the Smart Woman.

**By MIMOSA.**

To be really smart a woman must convey the impression of being daintily fastidious regarding her personal belongings and appearance. Her hair and skin must look as though they retained the appearance of youthfulness as a result of cleanliness and care. This is impossible where the skin is spasmodically subjected to experiments with all sorts of preparations. The really smart woman will know what she is using, and those who follow this advice will use only simple, pure ingredients that can be procured in original packages. If the chemist does not have what you want he can easily obtain it for you, if you insist. In many instances you will find, however, that the articles you require are at hand in your own home.

"Clammy Hands."—After washing your hands, rub over them a little fuller's earth mixed with orris, powdered. I think you will find that this will help.

"Beauty's Cheeks."—Some face creams have a tendency to induce a growth of down on the face. You can be on the safe side by avoiding made up creams, using instead, the natural mercolised wax. It will protect your face in motoring and holds the powder perfectly. It is the last word in smart, effective toilet luxury.

"Beautiful Lashes."—The character of the eyebrows and lashes certainly has much to do with the beauty of the face. Get about an ounce of mennaline and apply a little at night, brushing gently in the morning. This will bring about a decided improvement in the texture of your eyebrows and lashes.

"Washing Hair Brushes." — Scrupulous cleanliness of the brushes is necessary if you wish to keep your hair in good condition. The best way is to use curd soap and a little household ammonia in warm water. Let the brushes soak for a short time then wash them thoroughly. Rub as dry as possible and air in the sun.

"Velvet Skin."—Instead of several layers of face cream and powder try a solution of cleminite. Get an ounce, dissolve it in four ounces of water and bathe face with the solution, rubbing it quite dry. You will have a "skin like velvet" effect that will last for hours.

"Scanty Locks."—Thick glossy coils of your own hair means devoting time to brushing and scalp massage, also an occasional use of hair tonic to keep the hair healthy. The best and simplest tonic is bay rum and boranium. Get about an ounce of boranium in a small original packet, mix it with ½-pint of bay rum. This will clear off any dandruff and materially aid in producing the desired result.

"Large Pores and Blackheads."—This is the formula: Obtain a few stymol tablets from the chemists and dissolve one in a cup of hot water, after the effervescence has subsided, dab the face, using a small sponge. The result is quite startling. This is an excellent astringent. Used every day will close the enlarged pores and prevent wrinkles.

"Bloom of Health."—The use of rouge, if obvious, is rather vulgar. You can get over the difficulty and still have nice rosy cheeks by using powdered colliandum. Get a small tin and apply a little with the tips of the fingers. It is quite harmless, and its natural colour blends with the tint of the skin so its use can never be detected, if it is applied properly.

"In Bad Odour."—I do not know of any safe way to check excessive perspiration, but you can instantly kill the odour which is not only unpleasant to you, but to those about you, by applying a little powdered pergol.

"Cupid's Bow."—The best thing to use for your lips is just a stick of soft prolactum. Rub this over the lips and it will give them the desired colour and keep them soft and fresh.

"Superfluous Hair."—You can remove that undesirable down on your face with pheminol. Get an ounce and apply a little to the hair which can soon be rubbed off leaving the skin quite clear. It is very simple to use, and has the effect of so weakening the roots that the hair will not return.

"Lack-Lustre Hair."—If your hair is dull and lustreless after a shampoo, you are using something that is too soapy. Try just plain stallax. Get an original package as it is more economical. A teaspoonful in a cup of hot water for each shampoo is sufficient as it foams tremendously and rinses off easily, leaving the hair lustrous and fluffy with a dainty suggestion of perfume.

"Premature Greyness."—This trouble may be easily overcome, and the hair restored to its natural colour, by using concentrate of tammalite. Mix it with about the same quantity of bay rum, and apply with a small sponge.

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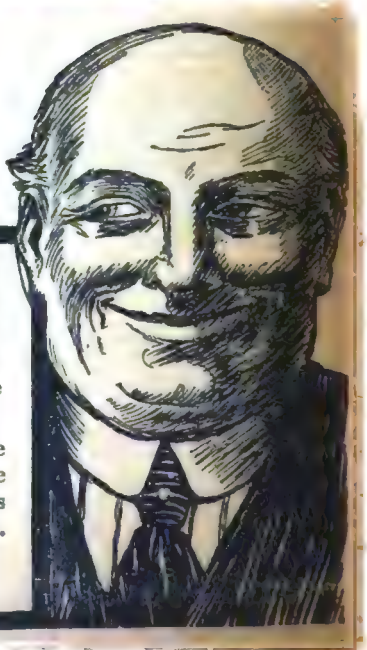

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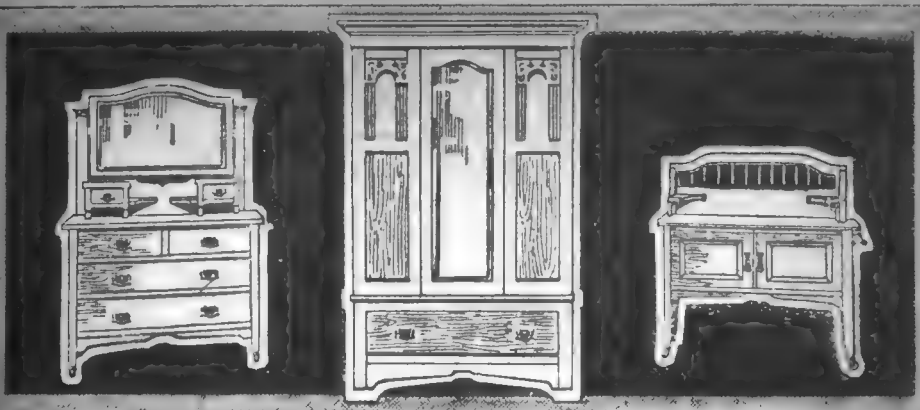

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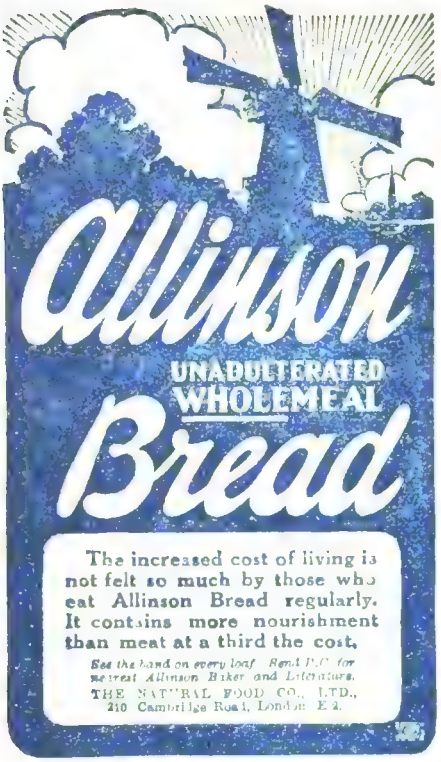


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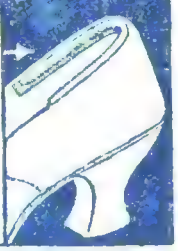

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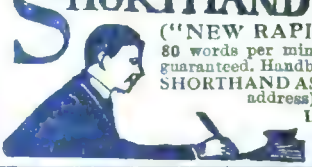

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Never in the memory of any living person was Catarrh so rife as at present. On all sides one meets people suffering from "Chronic Cold in the Head," Throat and Voice Troubles, Catarrhal Deafness, and Head Noises. This condition is far more serious than many imagine. It may lead to Consumption, Hearing Difficulties, or actual Deafness, as well as to some of the most dangerous diseases of the stomach.

I am determined, therefore, that every sufferer shall at least have the opportunity of personally testing the methods which I have already used so successfully in the treatment of others, and which I am convinced will give relief or cure even in the most obstinate and long-standing cases.

Strange as it may seem, many suffer from Catarrh but fail to recognise the symptoms. They feel ill, listless, liable to colds, and they have a difficulty in breathing through the nose, the natural and healthy way to breathe. For their guidance, here are some of the most common

**SYMPTOMS OF CATARRH.**

1. Huskiness of the Voice.
2. Frequent Fits of Sneezing.
3. Liability to Catch Cold Readily.
4. Stuffing up of the Nostrils.
5. Difficulty in Hearing.
6. Dryness of the Throat.
7. Persistent Dull Headaches.
8. Discharge from the Nose.
9. Crusts in Nasal Passages.
10. Frequent Expectoration of Mucus.
11. Loss of Sense of Smell.
12. Fulness in the Throat.
13. Phlegm Dropping into the Throat.
14. Noises in the Head and Ears.
15. Shortness of Breath.
16. Easily Affected by Weather Changes.
17. Pain Between and Over Eyes.
18. Fulness, or Pressure, in the Head.

If you are troubled with any two of the above Symptoms you are afflicted with dangerous Catarrh. In such case, I invite you to accept my Offer and see how quickly my Shirley System will overcome your trouble. Read what it has done for others. Here are only a few extracts from hundreds of similar letters which reach me daily:—

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**"I AM NOW QUITE WELL AGAIN."**

"I am delighted to tell you," writes Mrs. T. Wolff, of 32, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London, W., "that after suffering several years from Catarrh, I am now quite well again, thanks to the Shirley System. Please excuse me for not writing before, but I wanted to see if the cure was permanent, and I find it is."

**"CURED AFTER 12 MONTHS' SUFFERING."**

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If I had sufficient space in this magazine at my disposal I could reproduce hundreds of similar letters of grateful thanks from others. Do they not interest YOU? Why not, then, accept my Offer of a 10 DAYS' TRIAL? Do not neglect Catarrh! You cannot afford to do so, for it may lead to dangerous complications. Try my wonderful Shirley System, so that you can experience for yourself its benefits. No matter what other methods have failed, do not lose this grand opportunity. Write me to-day: Elmer Shirley, Dept. 431, Holborn Hall, London, W.C. This Ten Days' Trial will convince you that, just as my Treatment has helped others, so it will help you.

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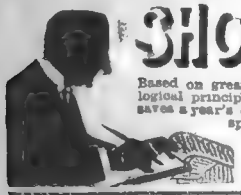

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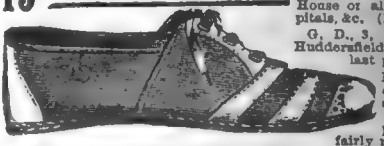

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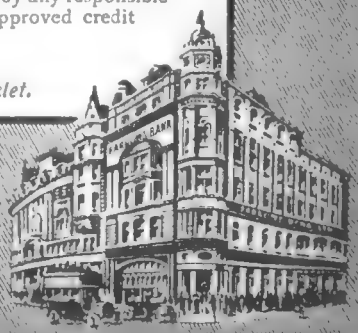

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Phyllis Monkman

*Photo, Wrather & Buys.*

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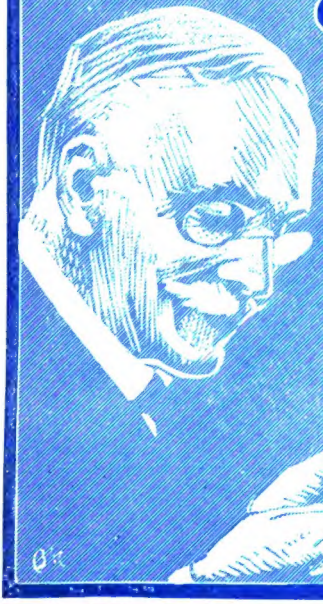

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